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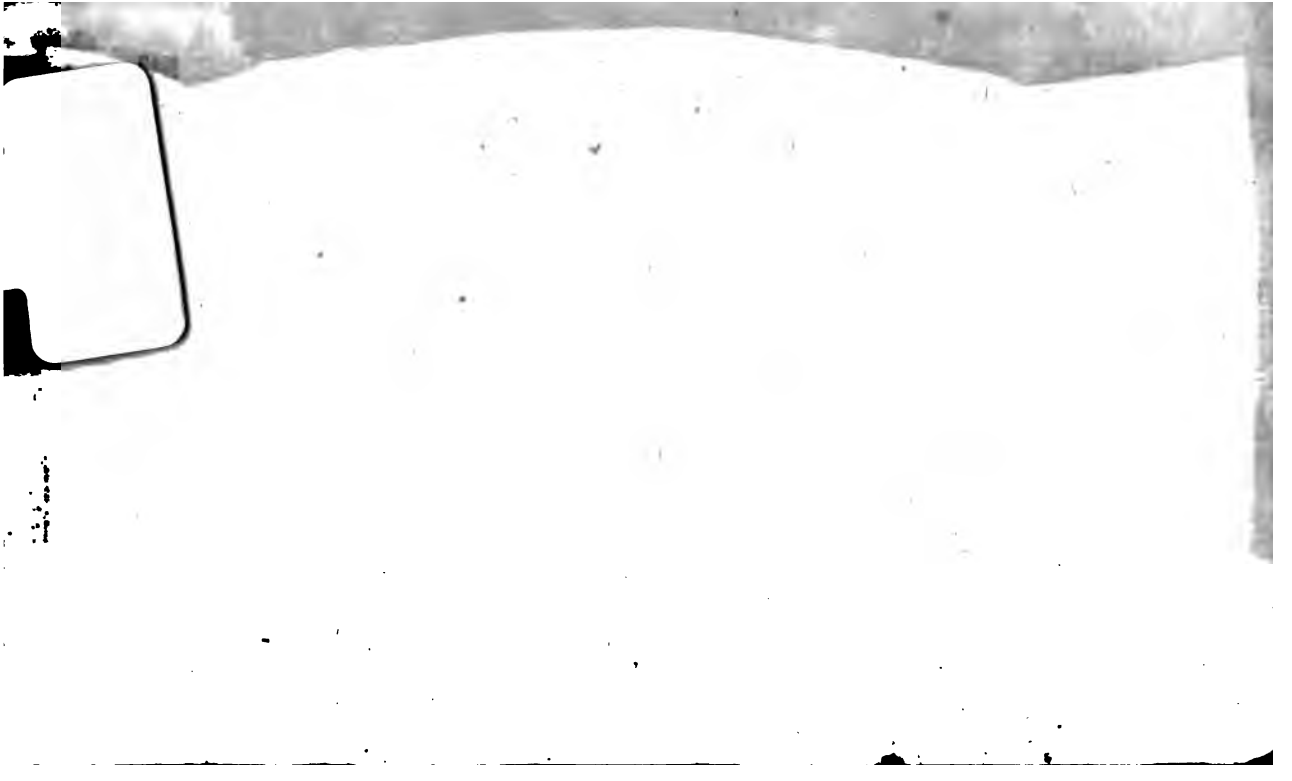

EACH SEX IN THEIR HUMOUR:

OR, THE HISTORIES

Of the Families of

BRIGHTLEY,
FINCH,
FORTESCUE,
SHELBURNE,
AND
STEVENS.

Written by a Lady of QUALITY,

Whilſt ſhe was abroad on her Travels, and found among her Papers ſince her deceaſe.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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EACH SEX

IN THEIR

HUMOUR.

BOOK IV.

MR. Finch imputed the baronet's ſhyneſs, with reſpect to Mr. Stapleton's propoſal, to his youth and inexperience, and was far from ſuſpecting the real cauſe; he, therefore, propoſed it to lady Brightley, and, as her ladyſhip entirely approved of it, he gave the old man the utmoſt encouragement.

Mrs. Slaughter, and poor miſs Shelburne, remained inviſible, for a whole week, to every inhabitant of Brightley (except the curate and Mrs. Alice) at which period, to the terror and conſternation of Mr. Stevens, the young lady's mother arrived, he happening to be an eye-witneſs of her alighting at the parſonage-houſe, and haſtened home, with a death-like countenance, to inform his friend of this new calamity.

Lady Brightley bade him take comfort, as, perhaps, ſo far from an evil, Mrs. Shelburne's reviſiting Brightley might prove a lucky, circumſtance, by giving her an opportunity, perſonally, to plead the young lady's cauſe; and the mother's compoſition having as large a ſhare of weakneſs and vanity in it, as obſtinacy and violence, her ladyſhip flattered herſelf, that, by humouring thoſe foibles with propriety, the faults of her temper might be ſoftened, if not totally ſubdued, and reſolved to drop in, as if accidentally, and, without delay, endeavour

deavour to effect this good purpoſe. She accordingly ſet forth for the houſe of her ſiſter, who was prepared to defeat her generous deſign, and had inſtructed Mrs. Alice, her huſband's uſeful domeſtic, to inform her ladyſhip, that Mrs. Shelburne was too much indiſpoſed to receive company.

Lady Brightley was both diſappointed and offended at this unexpected repulſe. She was ſenſible it was no more than a fineſſe of her ſiſter's; but, as ſhe was incapable of retaliating an ungenteel action, ſhe returned home, mortified, diſconcerted, and, on miſs Shelburne's account, greatly concerned. The ill ſucceſs of this attempt affected Mr. Stevens to ſuch a degree, as to render him quite unguarded, though in her ladyſhip's preſence, with reſpect to his inclination for her fair friend; yet ſo conſiderate was this good lady, as to appear unmindful of his extreme emotion, and tender complaints, and, in order to ſave him from uneaſy reflections, on the recovery of

his recollection, ſhe withdrew, and left him in the care of his friend, who uſed every kind method to compoſe him.

The next morning lady Brightley made a ſecond attempt to ſee Mrs. Shelburne, but was equally unſucceſsful as ſhe had been the preceding day. The curate played leaſt in ſight, to avoid becoming a party in the affair, and the ſecond morning, before the riſing ſun, was this young lady conveyed from Brightley, and every object that could give her delight, accompanied only by a mother, inconceivably unnatural, and unfeeling.

The amiable girl ſupported the calamity of being torn from all ſhe held dear, with an amazing fortitude, and performed the journey, notwithſtanding the perſecution ſhe underwent, of reproachful taunts, and unjuſt accuſations, free from all apparent fatigue or diſcompoſure. Her father received her with a contracted brow, and, aſſuming an uncommon ſternneſs of accent, demanded,

demanded, if he beheld an obedient, or undutiful child? Miſs Lucy replied, ſhe hoped ſhe had never merited the latter appellation. 'No equivocation, girl,' returned this unkind parent, 'it is not profeſſions, but actions, that ſhall ſpeak you 'what you are. And, I now declare, that 'it is not only my pleaſure, but command, 'that you conſider Mr. Peat as your deſtined huſband, by which means we ſhall 'bring your boaſted duty to the teſt.' A gentle tremor ſeized the breaſt of miſs Shelburne, and the image of Mr. Stevens ſpontaneouſly occurred to her imagination; but ſhe was too well acquainted with her father's diſpoſition, to flatter herſelf with the moſt diſtant hope of winning him from his purpoſe, ſhe therefore remained ſilent, penſive, and deeply afflicted. He had the humanity to leave her to her own meditations, for that evening, and her indulgent mother followed his example. She had, however, a female ſpy upon her motions, to whom Mrs. Shelburne was greatly attached, as ſhe poſſeſſed a very agreeable

quality, the art of flattering, and, conſequently, pleaſing her miſtreſs. This creature, notwithſtanding ſhe was an adept in the ſcience of deceit, was touched with unfeigned compaſſion for her fair diſtreſſed priſoner, and ſecretly wiſhed the young lady would requeſt her to ſet her at liberty, or, rather, make her the companion of her flight. Her communicative miſtreſs had informed her, that it was in order to prevent her daughter's diſpoſing of herſelf unworthily, that ſhe was hurried to town with ſuch precipitation; but the girl imagined, that it was merely from their prepoſſeſſion in favour of Mr. Peat, that miſs Lucy's country lover was rejected, and not on account of his circumſtances, and concluded, that ſhe ſhould obtain no ſmall reward by making herſelf inſtrumental to their happy union. She, therefore, determined to break the way for an explanation, if miſs Shelburne neglected applying to her; for which purpoſe ſhe officiouſly obtruded herſelf, on many needleſs occaſions, until miſs Shelburne, at length, thinking her troubleſome,

aſked,

aſked, if ſhe had orders to interrupt her retirement in the manner ſhe had done for ſome time? The artful girl begged pardon, in very civil terms, for her ſeeming impertinence, and ſaid, ſhe hoped the goodneſs of her intention would atone for her aukward proceedings, for ſhe was ſo concerned at her maſter and miſtreſs's harſhneſs and ſeverity, that ſhe was willing to undertake the moſt difficult attempt to deliver her out of their hands. Miſs Shelburne was no leſs offended, than ſurpriſed, at this well intended offer. 'I impute your 'ſtrange behaviour,' ſaid ſhe, 'to your un-'acquaintedneſs with my diſpoſition. I 'have no need of your aſſiſtance, as I have 'not a wiſh to fly from my beſt friends, and 'beg, as you tender your place, I may not 'be troubled any more on this ſubject.' The wench conſidered this young lady's rejection of her friendly offices, as a want of confidence in her fidelity, and would have exerted the utmoſt rhetoric ſhe was miſtreſs of, to remove her doubts and ſuſpicions, had not miſs Shelburne, with a diſpleaſed

countenance, and reſolute accent, forbid her uttering one more ſyllable, at her peril, commanding her, at the ſame time, to leave her.

No ſooner was ſhe alone, than that prudent pride which had ſupported her, during the girl's continuance in her apartment, forſook her, and her heart, involuntarily, underwent many ſoft ſenſations. 'Alas,' ſaid ſhe, 'how little do we complaining mortals conceive, how infinitely our ſeemingly moſt diſagreeable things can be aggravated! Before I viſited Gloceſterſhire, I believed myſelf completely unhappy, becauſe addreſſed by a man who was highly diſguſtful to me; but I have returned doubly afflicted, as I now, too ſenſibly, perceive, I have not only that natural repugnance to ſtruggle with, but a tender inclination for an agreeable object to ſubdue. Why was Mr. Stevens ſo engaging? or, rather, why did my heart become ſo ſuſceptible of his merit? Happily, a frame ſo weak as mine, will not ſuſtain

ſuch

'ſuch violent agitations, but will prove a 'ſeaſonable relief, by its diſſolution, for all 'my ſufferings.' In theſe reflections did ſhe paſs the night, and received an early ſummons from her father, to attend him in his chamber. Her ſleepleſs eye, and pallid cheek, at firſt awakened all the parent in his heart, but he prudently ſuppreſſed the riſing tenderneſs, by fortifying himſelf with the recollection of Mr. Peat's wealthy alliance; a conſideration ſufficient to bear down all oppoſition.

'Lucy,' ſaid the provident parent, 'it is 'amazing that you will, by your diſobe- 'dience and obſtinacy, render the ſight of 'you offenſive to an, hitherto, indulgent 'and affectionate father. Which of us, I 'beſeech you, is to ſubmit, you, or I? 'You have, at preſent, an opportunity of 'making me and yourſelf happy; unleſs, 'indeed, you are ſo attached to your 'beggarly lover, as to be unmindful of 'every advantage of that good fortune 'that now awaits you. I have, long ſince,

'paſſed my word to my friend, and ex-
'pect to be enabled to fulfil it. What!'
ſaid he, raiſing his voice, 'ſhall a creature,
'that owes its exiſtence to me, dare to diſ-
'pute my will? But I will be calm, and
'inſiſt upon your poſitive determination,
'whether you will, or will not, marry Mr.
'Peat, on Thurſday morning.' 'My dear
'father,' returned miſs Shelburne, 'only
'three poor days?' 'I think,' interrupted
the parent, 'the girl's a natural; who, that
'could ſee you at this moment, would ſuſ-
'pect any other, than that I was ſentencing
'you for execution? Not a word more,'
continued he, 'Thurſday next is the day.
'I ſuppoſe you mean to favour us with
'your company, by and by, in the dining-
'room.' So ſaying, he left her, half dead
with terror and affliction.

In order to relieve her mind from its ex-
treme depreſſion, ſhe had recourſe to her
pen; and as Brightley had an alluſion to
Mr. Stevens, and lady Brightley an imme-
diate

diate connection with him, ſhe addreſſed the following lines to that worthy friend:

'ACCEPT, dear lady Brightley, a 'laſt farewel, from that unhappy 'Lucy Shelburne you have been pleaſed to 'honor with your friendſhip and counte-'nance. Three ſhort days is all the ſpace 'left between her and deſtruction. The 'ſentence is irrevocably paſſed, and ſhe 'forbid, by every tye of filial duty, to call 'the judge ſevere. The moſt agreeable 'period of her life was ſpent in converſe 'with you; a happineſs which ſhe muſt 'never more enjoy. What a felicity, com-'pared to her preſent ſituation, would it 'have been to her, to have ſlept the peace-'ful ſleep of the grave, in that humble 'ſpot of which your ladyſhip's cloſet win-'dow commands a view! but ſhe is unwil-'lingly detained, on this argument of life; 'and, notwithſtanding her apparent decay, 'Thurſday next is allotted for a great 'change in her mortal ſtate. That fatal day 'ſhe is to become, in appearance, a gay,

'though, in reality, a mourning bride, as 'her heart is incapable of that violence her 'hand will undergo, nor can be united, by 'any human appointment, to the man 'chosen for her. One chance she has for 'the recovery of her peace, to which she 'looks forward with an eye of joyful expec-'tation; that glad period once attained, 'and she will be beyond the reach of dis-'appointment, misery, and affliction: her 'health will no more be subject to decay, 'her mind to fetters. Until that happy 'event takes place, she will never cease to 'remember her lady Brightley with grati-'tude and affection, nor forget to wish that 'felicity to her and her friends, which will 'hereafter be incompatible with the breast 'of her obliged,

'LUCY SHELBURNE.'

She had no sooner thrown these incoherent sentences on paper, than her mind seemed in part disburdened of its weight; and, as she was well convinced, that, by yielding to the present necessity of her circumstances,

cumſtances, ſhe ſhould neither add to, nor diminiſh, the calamity that threatened her, ſhe determined to comply with her father's humour, in every article, except the deciſive one. She, therefore, prepared for appearing at dinner, and, on being informed it was upon table, entered the room, with her letter to lady Brightley, unſealed, in her hand. She was above engaging in any chamber-maid cabals, or lowering herſelf by an improper confidence; and as her letter might have been intercepted, if ſhe had even attempted a private conveyance of it, and peruſed by her father, ſhe judged it beſt to offer it voluntarily to him, not without ſecret hopes of his declining the acceptance of it. 'I have, ſir,' ſaid ſhe, 'juſt finiſhed this 'ſhort epiſtle to lady Brightley, will you 'pleaſe to examine it?' Her frankneſs had 'the deſired effect; for the ſagacious Mr. Shelburne, from a perſuaſion that the contents muſt be unexceptionable, by his daughter's conduct, ſaid, he doubted not but it was proper, and permitted her to ſeal, and diſpatch it by a ſervant then in waiting

waiting. Mr. Peat was ſeated at the table, and, on her entrance, his eyes twinkled with uncommon luſtre, and the habitual contraction of his brow was ſomewhat relaxed. His curling eye-brows, once ebon black, though now party-coloured by age, were in viſible neat order, and his hoary chin had been decently trimmed; his ſuit was new, ſpotleſs, and elegant, and his fringed cravat judiciouſly diſplayed; a ſparkling gem adorned his withered finger, and he might be allowed to make, for a man of ſeventy, a very lover-like appearance. Miſs Shelburne was ſo ill a judge as to diſregard outſide, nor were all the attractions above-mentioned, with her, in the ſmalleſt degree, availing. She was concerned to ſee old age rendered irreverent, by an affectation of youth; and, forgetting his large poſſeſſions, thought it a horrid ſacrifice to be wedded to one who, in reſpect of years, might have been her grandfather.

When

When the cloth was removed, Mr. and Mrs. Shelburne withdrew on various pretences, and left the ancient lover to entertain his miſtreſs. Miſs Shelburne was in that diſpoſition of mind which properly comes under the denomination of inſenſible, at leaſt with reſpect to the objects around her, when a thought of Brightley occurred to her imagination, which contributed to ſtrengthen, rather than abate, her averſion to her antiquated admirer.

After a profound ſilence, of ſome minutes continuance, Mr. Peat ventured to declare the great ſatisfaction miſs Shelburne's return gave him, with a complimental obſervation on the apparent improvement of her health. 'I confeſs,' replied the young lady, 'that the Gloceſter-'ſhire air has had a happy effect upon 'my conſtitution, but I have abundant 'reaſon to apprehend, that I ſhall ſoon loſe, 'in London, the benefit I acquired in that 'country.' 'Hope for the beſt, miſs,' returned the enamoured banker.' 'I have no

'grounds

'grounds to flatter myſelf,' replied miſs Shelburne, haſtily, 'with the preſervation 'of what is intirely dependent upon my 'peace of mind, now that the ſacrifice of 'that peace is fixed without a proſpect of 'repeal. Oh ſir,' continued ſhe, (yielding to the natural impulſe of her heart, unmindful of the diſagreeable conſequence, ſhould ſhe be unſucceſsful) with a moſt emphatic accent, 'can you profeſs a re-'gard for a poor dying creature, yet be 'acceſſary to precipitating her, ſome days 'before her appointed time, into the laſt 'ſtation of mortality? If you would be ſo 'generous as to decline all connexion with 'a being, whoſe diſſolution is near at hand, 'you would confer an unſpeakable obliga-'tion on a not ungrateful heart, and render 'the cloſing ſcene of that woman's life you 'favour with your eſteem and approbation, 'mentally happy.' 'Could I be perſuad-'ed, miſs,' returned the banker, 'that to 'leave you in your preſent wild ſtate, 'would anſwer the purpoſe you mention, 'I certainly would deſiſt; but, miſs, I am

'too

'too well acquainted with your heart, not 'to be convinced, that a few days would 'reconcile you to that dutiful conſidera- 'tion a ſhort ceremony would intitle me 'to, from you; eſpecially when you re- 'flected, that the happineſs of your father 'and mother is hinged upon it, as well as 'your own future advantage.' 'Tell me 'not of advantage,' replied the half frantic miſs Shelburne, 'what charms can worldly 'advantages have for a creature on the 'verge of the grave? But, ſir,' added ſhe, riſing, 'it is unneceſſary for you and I to 'have any farther converſation, as it is 'now beyond a doubt that we are too well 'acquainted with each others private ſen- 'timents; your perſecution of me will not 'I find ceaſe, but with my exiſtence, nor 'will my repugnance to every inter- 'courſe with ſo narrow and ſelfiſh a 'mind as yours, ever be ſubdued, until 'that period.' She then, dropping a curtſy, hurried to her own apartment, to reflect, with heart-felt affliction and mortification, on the part ſhe had unwarily acted, and its unhappy ill ſucceſs. The antiquated

antiquated lover was changed almoſt to petrifaction, by his miſtreſs's behaviour, and, for ſome time ſtood motionleſs, with his eyes fixed upon that ſubſtantial cloud, the door, that eclipſed his Juno. Unfortunately for miſs Shelburne, her mother joined Mr. Peat before his conſternation had ſubſided, and (to uſe her own expreſſion) read her daughter's diſobedience in the diſſatisfaction of his countenance. 'But, 'ſir,' added ſhe, 'you ſhall be no more 'expoſed to theſe diſagreeable rebuffs. If 'you continue willing to receive the per-'verſe creature's hand, on the day appoint-'ed, I will engage ſhe ſhall beſtow it, with-'out practicing any more of her romantic 'and ridiculous fancies.'

. . . . . .

'Madam,' returned Mr. Peat, 'I am 'infinitely indebted to your kindneſs and 'civility, it does, indeed, in a conſider-'able degree, compenſate the ungenteel 'treatment I have juſt met with from your 'daughter, and I nevertheleſs profeſs my-'ſelf willing to adhere to my primitive en-'gagement,

'gagement, of becoming your's, and my 'friend's ſon-in-law, provided you can 'effect it; as I am ſuperior to a breach 'of contract.' Mrs. Shelburne extolled the generoſity of this old lover, and left him, with a reſolution of frightening her daughter into a compliance, ſince every perſuaſive method had proved ineffectual. With this good purpoſe of heart, ſhe followed her to her chamber, but found her in a condition that required aſſiſtance, inſtead of the harſh uſage ſhe had intended her. This young lady had juſt been able to reach her apartment before ſhe was ſeized with a convulſive attack, under the violent operation of which ſhe laboured at her mother's entrance. The ſhocking change this occaſioned in the daughter's countenance, ſurpriſed this, otherwiſe, unfeeling mother, in an uncommon manner, and put her quite off her guard. She ran, wildly, into the compting-houſe, to her huſband, crying aloud, that Lucy was dying! the agonies of death were upon her!

This

This really affectionate, though wrong-headed, father, with diſtraction in his looks, flew to ſave and aſſiſt, as he now called her, his dear child and *only* comfort. This laſt expreſſion, though caſually dropped, and extorted by the moſt afflicting apprehenſions, was, nevertheleſs, treaſured up in reſentful remembrance, by his affronted conſort. He no ſooner beheld the ravage miſs Shelburne's dreadful diſorder had made in her fine features, than he became quite outrageous, accuſed his wife and Mr. Peat of being the cauſe of this diſaſter, and execrated his own folly and weakneſs, in thus ſacrificing his darling child to the ill-timed affection of the one, and ambition of the other. His own inclination for accumulating was forgotten at this juncture, and it was ſome relief, to the compunction he felt, to divide, or rather caſt the chief weight of thoſe faulty proceedings, by which this misfortune was derived, upon his wife and partner. He took one of his daughter's hands, which he retained with difficulty, and calling repeatedly upon her, declared

declared, that ſhe had no farther violence to apprehend with reſpect to Mr. Peat. 'I do, my dear Lucy,' ſaid he, 'diſclaim 'my former intention, nor will I ever again 'attempt to conſtrain your inclinations.' However ſoothing this declaration, miſs Shelburne was incapable of experiencing its efficacy. And notwithſtanding ſhe had every means imaginable uſed, for her recovery, ſhe continued in a melancholy condition for two days. Her phyſician was of opinion, that her face would remain diſtorted, if ſhe was even reſtored to her reaſon, and ſaid her nerves would be rendered ſo weak and relaxed by the ſeverity of the diſtemper, as to be liable, on every little ſurpriſe and vexation, to a relapſe. Mrs. Shelburne's countenance flamed with unperceived heat and reſentment, for the ſlighting ſpeech her huſband had let drop, for the firſt eight and forty hours of her daughter's illneſs; but when her diſorder began to abate, her huſband enquired, with unaffected ſolicitude, into the cauſe of her diſcontent, which gave her an opportunity, not-

'believe will be, glad tidings, to that
'worthy friend. Her father has, happily,
'ſacrificed the wiſh of his heart to ſave his,
'otherwiſe, irrecoverable child from diſſo-
'lution, and continues all tenderneſs and
'indulgence. To the South of France,
'my dear lady Brightley, is Lucy Shel-
'burne deſtined, as the only means of re-
'covering that health, ſo lately blaſted in
'Lombard-ſtreet, which ſhe derived from
'the Brightley air. Were there a poſſibi-
'lity of meeting at Montpelier, that vene-
'rable building, the viſiting of which was
'the higheſt ſatisfaction ſhe enjoyed, in
'Gloceſterſhire, ſhe would not heſitate to
'undertake the journey. But as, in this
'age, miracles are ceaſed, ſhe would
'gladly leave that hoſpitable dwelling, to
'adorn the village it belongs, would but
'the inhabitants take up their abode, for
'a ſhort ſpace, in a foreign clime. The
'lure of friendſhip is infinitely more attrac-
'tive in ſome hearts than others, or rather
'objects are unequally meritorious. Such
'an intimation from a lady Brightley,
'would

'would operate like magic with Lucy 'Shelburne, was ſhe at liberty to purſue 'her own inclination; but, alas, ſhe de-'ſpairs of ſucceſs, even were ſhe to uſe 'ſtrong and pathetic ſolicitations for ſuch 'a happy condeſcenſion. This, however, 'ſhe muſt be bold to affirm, that her lady-'ſhip's company and converſation would 'mitigate her pain, and be of more avail 'to her than ten phyſicians. The honour 'of a letter would be highly acceptable, 'to her ladyſhip's moſt obliged,

LUCY SHELBURNE.

Lady Brightley had no ſooner peruſed this epiſtle, than ſhe communicated the contents to her ſon and Mr. Stevens. Sir William ſighed at the mention of a country he had long, though ſecretly, wiſhed to viſit, which her ladyſhip ſenſibly perceived, but ſuffered to paſs unnoticed, and in a ſhort time after, retired to her cloſet. The baronet and his friend remained ſilent from, in ſome degree, ſimilar reflections. France, indeed, had the larg-

eſt ſhare of ſir William's thoughts, miſs Shelburne thoſe of Mr. Stevens. Lady Brightley had carried the affecting conſideration of the violence ſhe impoſed upon her ſon, in detaining him in that remote corner of the world, into her retirement. Some conceſſion on her ſide, her goodneſs of heart ſuggeſted, was now neceſſary, in return for his ſteady, and almoſt unprecedented, compliance, for ſo many years, with her particularity of humour. She had been abroad in her youth, and was no ſtranger to the manners, cuſtoms, and language of France and Italy, and ſhe was half inclined to conquer her diſinclination for travelling, to gratify the newly diſcovered deſire of her ſon's heart. The more ſhe reflected upon the ſelf-denial he had ſo long practiſed, the more ſhe thought it incumbent on her to oblige him in turn, and ſhe was ſurpriſed at her, hitherto, inſenſibility, and inattention in this particular. The opinion of Mr. Finch was always deciſive with her ladyſhip, and ſhe determined to conſult him upon the preſent occaſion. This good man heard her ladyſhip's

ſhip's declaration with pleaſure, and left nothing unſaid to encourage and promote her reſolution. 'If my fortune,' ſaid this gentleman, 'was not ſo limited, and I 'could ſhake off this incumberance,' caſting an eye upon his wooden ſtump, 'both 'I and Mrs. Finch would be of your party; 'but though that is impoſſible, we will, 'in imagination, attend you, in conjunc'tion with our warmeſt wiſhes for your 'happineſs and entertainment. But, lady 'Brightley,' continued this gentleman, 'I 'have one condition to propoſe, which I 'hope you will chearfully comply with, 'or I ſhall repent the diſintereſted advice I 'have given you. I muſt not have Brightley 'deſerted, except upon this occaſion. I 'confeſs, I am not without apprehenſions, 'that when once you have emerged into 'life, this peaceful ſpot will be forgotton 'by you.' 'I aſſure you,' returned lady Brightley, ſmiling, 'your clauſe is unne'ceſſary, for I am of opinion, I ſhall ſigh 'in ſecret, from the time of quitting my 'retirement, until I am reſtored to it, as

'is no leſs natural to me than pleaſing. The young gentlemen were far from imagining how materially they were concerned in this conſultation, and were moſt agreeably ſurpriſed, on her ladyſhip's communicating her unexpected intention. Sir William's joy was viſibly depicted in his countenance, but he found his expreſſions inadequate to his ſenſations. Mr. Stevens's ſatisfaction was allayed by a lurking and powerful apprehenſion his heart entertained, of objections being made to his accompanying ſir William, by the friends of miſs Shelburne, which, however, proved to be groundleſs and unneceſſary. Lady Brightley diſpatched a letter of intelligence to miſs Shelburne, of the reſolution ſhe had taken, and begged an immediate anſwer, to inform her, they ſhould join company before the commencement of their journey, or their meeting to be deferred until their arrival in the French dominions.

. . . . . .

This letter, the tranſported miſs Shelburne put into the hands of her father, and

and intreated his ſpeedy determination. 'You ſee the honour, ſir,' ſaid ſhe, 'lady 'Brightley offers me, of taking me under 'her protection; can you, my dear ſir, 'have any objection?' 'Not in the leaſt, 'my child,' returned this ſoftened parent, 'her ladyſhip will, I hope, contribute to 'keep up your ſpirits, by which means 'alone you will be able to perform this 'neceſſary journey.' Mrs. Shelburne was too deeply engaged by preparations of gewgaws and finery, in order to her making an elegant figure in a French aſſembly, to attend to any other particulars, and her diſlike to Mr. Stevens was entirely forgotten by her, inſomuch that his company became perfectly eligible in her ſight, from the conſideration of the neceſſity ſhe might be reduced to in a ſtrange country, if ſhe had not a polite, well-bred young fellow, to ſquire her to publick places.

. . . . . .

Whilſt the trifling preliminaries were adjuſting in Lombard-ſtreet, lady Brightley's mind underwent ſome repugnant pangs, as

the time of their departure from her ancient abode approached, and had ſhe not been ſupported by Mr. Finch, her reſolves had ended in her ſon's diſappointment. Mr. Shelburne was ſo ſolicitous to promote his daughter's happineſs, to prevent the misfortune of becoming childleſs, that he wrote a letter of polite invitation to lady Brightley, to make his houſe her home, during her continuance in London, which her ladyſhip as politely declined, as a lodging, for the few days ſhe propoſed ſtaying, was far more agreeable to her, from an uncurable averſion ſhe had conceived for his wife.

The parting between Mrs. Finch and her ladyſhip, was very affecting, nor did the melancholy of the laſt wear off for many miles, but her conſideration for her ſon's repoſe, at laſt diſpelled the chagrin ſhe had contracted, and ſhe became herſelf again. They, in due time, arrived ſafe in London, without any remarkable adventure or occurrence, and miſs Shelburne

Burne was ſoon convinced, that the preſence of Mr. Stevens was as eſſential a reſtorative to her peace of mind and tranquility, as the air of Montpelier could poſſibly be for her bodily health. They embarked with a favourable wind at Dover, and were ſhortly wafted to the Gallic ſhore, where we will leave them to purſue their journey, and once more reviſit the forlorn inhabitants of Brightley.

As Mrs. Slaughter and Mrs. Finch were not upon neighbourly terms, the time hung heavy, with the laſt-mentioned lady and her huſband, for ſome ſhort period, after lady Brightley's departure. Mr. Stapleton would often look in upon them, and lament the young gentleman's loſs, as he was the only youth he could have wiſhed to beſtow his Caroline and fortune upon. Mr. Finch flattered him that he might return with a diſengaged heart, and, undoubtedly, would receive no ſmall improvement from an extenſive obſervation of men and things. But the old man would ſhake his head, and

ſay, he was ſufficiently accompliſhed for his girl, if this foreign jaunt had been omitted, and that he feared he ſhould never live to ſee him return, but he would add, upon this occaſion, 'I hope you will 'give me leave, in ſuch a caſe, to recom-'mend the poor girl to your care, and 'that I may depend upon your friendly 'endeavours to promote this deſire of my 'heart, if agreeable to all parties. Mr. Finch promiſed with a ſincere intention of performing, to eſpouſe the young lady's cauſe, as he believed he ſhould, by ſuch a procedure, oblige lady Brightley, and be inſtrumental to the young people's felicity.

Miſs Forteſcue, as her ſhyneſs wore off, became very agreeable company, and after one fortnight had elapſed of conſtant viſiting, at Mr. Finch's, ſhe ſupplied, by her innocent converſation and vivacity, in a great degree, the loſs they had ſuſtained of their much valued friends. During this period of tranquility, the old gentleman

man was taken off by a decay of nature, and poor miſs Forteſcue left, until the age of twenty-one, intirely dependant upon her avaritious father.

This was far from Mr. Stapleton's intention, in the latter part of his life, but he had poſtponed the alteration of his will, until he was deprived of the capacity of doing it; a proof of the folly and impropriety of procraſtination in ſuch an important affair. Mr. Finch acquainted Mr. Forteſcue, by letter, of his father-in-law's deceaſe, who received the news with gladneſs; and, in order to avoid expence, begged the favour of Mr. Finch to give directions for his decent interment at Brightley, pleading buſineſs as an excuſe for his non-attendance. As to Caroline, he ſaid, he left it in her own option either to return immediately to London, or finiſh the ſummer in the country. The latter of which alternatives was her choice.

upon her imagination. It was, in her opinion, the higheſt ambition to expect his approbation, as what he could approve muſt be little inferior to perfection. He was a ſtranger to vanity and affectation, and though it might with truth be ſaid, ſimplicity and modeſty were all her arts, and beauty all her arms: yet the man of war was diſcomfited, and, notwithſtanding he had eſcaped wounding in the field, he was unequal to the united force of unaſſiſted nature and genuine truth.

The good humoured Mr. Finch, and his amiable partner, enjoyed reciprocal ſatisfaction from beholding the object of their united affections, mature in every valuable accompliſhment. He would frequently mention, with a friendly warmth, the merit of the young baronet, and the great qualities and abilities of his friend, and regret their abſence. At one of theſe junctures he unluckily communicated the engagement he was under to promote, and the ardent wiſh he entertained to effect, an union, between

miſs

miſs Forteſcue and the heir of Brightley. The young lady ſpeaking, exchanged a look with the captain, whoſe eyes involuntarily met the innocent fair-one's, whilſt his father made the above wounding declaration. In vain did he endeavour to ſuppreſs the anguiſh of his heart, and was too late convinced how feeble is reaſon's aid, when ſummoned, not to prevent, but to eraſe, a tender impreſſion. The remaining part of the evening became tedious, the converſation diſtaſteful, and the hour of retirement, in his imagination, advanced by heavy, ſlow degrees. Every faculty of his ſoul was ſuſpended, or, rather, engroſſed, by one object; his eye beheld nought but miſs Forteſcue, his ear could admit no other ſound than her voice. His attention, his reflection, his every thought, however directed, or, at firſt employed, returned to the contemplation of her alone, in ſpite of all his efforts to the contrary. When he had attained that ſolitary ſtate he had for ſome hours deſired, inſtead of finding the relief he expected, his dejection was infi-

nitely

nitely aggravated and increased. "Surely," said he, "I visited this spot in an evil hour. Who would have imagined that I, that have passed much time in the greatest cities on the continent, and beheld a variety of agreeable women with unshaken indifference, or, at least, without particular consideration, should be reserved for the fate I now experience? The object that has engaged my attachment is, indisputably, amiable, but allotted, by a dying parent, for a happier youth, whose interest is espoused by my own revered father. It is best for me to make an honourable retreat, and endeavour to lose, in the duties of my profession, a remembrance of this too lovely miss Fortescue. I will write, to-morrow, to my colonel, and desire him to summons me immediately to town, by which step, alone, I shall be enabled to be just to the lady, my father, and my own character." The next day after this heroic resolution, he had an unexpected opportunity of entertaining miss Fortescue, apart from all other com-

gaily. This young lady had paſſed the preceding night at his father's, and had occaſion to go to farmer Johnſon's ſo ſoon as ſhe had breakfaſted. This was the very morning Mr. Finch had intended to dedicate to writing to his colonel for the purpoſe abovementioned; but, on his father's propoſing his attendance on the young lady, his reſolutions and intentions were totally forgotten; and, notwithſtanding he was, moſt unqueſtionably, intitled to the reputation of an obedient and dutiful ſon, yet it would have been evident, to the moſt common obſerver, that he was particularly ſo on this occaſion. The young lady accepted his company, without the affected parade of oppoſition, acknowledging herſelf obliged to him, without attempting an apology for giving him the trouble. Her little heart was replete with ſatisfaction, which ſhe had not the leaſt notion of concealing. Mr. Finch perceived, or imagined he perceived, this encouraging approbation, and felt an unuſual ſelf-conſequence. When they had got clear of his father's

houſe

house and garden, they came within view of Brightley-hall, at the sight of which a recollection occurred to the warrior, which gave rise to a sigh that escaped unperceived. 'You were accustomed, I understand,' miss Forteſcue,' ſaid this young gentleman, with an emotion he endeavoured to ſuppreſs, 'to viſit, very frequently, at that antique dwelling.' 'I aſſure you, ſir,' returned the young lady, 'you have been miſinformed, for I never yet have beheld the inſide of that habitation.' 'You aſtoniſh me,' reply'd the captain, pleaſure glowing on his cheek, but the remembrance of his father's declaration coming acroſs him, he added, with altered looks and accent, 'you were intimate with lady Brightley, and the young baronet, notwithſtanding?' 'I had the pleaſure of ſeeing the lady and gentleman you mention,' replied miſs Forteſcue, 'the firſt day I arrived at Brightley, at your father's.' 'And at no other time?' interrogated Mr. Finch. 'No other, upon my honor,' returned the innocent girl. 'But why,' added

ſhe,

ſhe, 'ſhould you ſuſpect the contrary?'
'Miſs Forteſcue,' replied Mr. Finch, 'I
'ſincerely beg your pardon for my impertinence; though did you know my motives, for being thus inquiſitive, I fear
'you would not be inclined to pardon me.
'Bleſs me,' ſaid miſs Forteſcue, 'what can
'you mean? you will really, ſir, make me
'uneaſy, unleſs you explain yourſelf.' 'O
'miſs Forteſcue,' ſaid Mr. Finch, 'this is
'a ſtring I ought not to have touched
'upon. I ſhould, from many conſiderations,
'have reſtrained my curioſity, as your
'fortune places you no leſs beyond my
'reach, than my father's intention, with
'reſpect to the happy baronet. Yet I will
'preſume to declare, that ſir William
'Brightley cannot be more ſenſible of your
'merit, and innate perfections, than I am,
'though proſperity, and the attainment of
'your affections, will be the lot of the
'one, narrow circumſtances, and the keen
'mortification of loſing what he muſt ever
'eſteem, the portion of the other.' An
inbred modeſty, ſealed the lips of this un-

inſtructed

inducted innocent, and refrained not from acknowledging the favourable sentiments she entertained for the man before her, or betraying the gentle compassion his expressions had excited in her tender breast. The artless blush that adorned her cheek, alone spoke encouragement, and her lover began to conceive, from the soft confusion his declaration had apparently occasioned, in her undissembling heart, that he was by no means indifferent to her.

'Had I been born a baronet,' resumed the young gentleman, 'or was my paternal 'inheritance, ought besides the valuable 'reflection of my parent's virtues, perhaps, 'my pretensions would not be discountenanced by miss Fortescue's friends, but 'an alliance will, undoubtedly, be sought 'for her, suitable in dignity to those ex'pectations, her large possessions intitle 'her to; nor would the poor pretender 'escape the brow-beatings of the wealthy, 'however sincere his affection, however 'unexceptionable his origin.' 'Alas,' said the gentle miss Fortescue, with a look of

sweet

'sweet perplexity, the favours of fortune 'but expose the poſſeſſor to calamities un- 'known to the peaceful indigent: for 'ſurely, a greater cannot be found in the 'catalogue of human ills, than a diſunion 'of hearts and ſentiments, in thoſe beings 'whoſe lives are caſt in one inevitable lot. 'The felicity I have experienced in the 'company and converſation of your good 'mother, has its ſource in the ſimilitude of 'our diſpoſitions, her wiſhes, her inclina- 'tions, ſo perfectly coincide with mine, 'that in complying with her humour, I 'entirely follow my own: I can, from that 'ſingle inſtance, form a too ſenſible judg- 'ment of the unhappineſs an ingenuous 'mind muſt endure in an oppoſite ſtate, 'where every conceſſion would be conſi- 'dered as a violence, every compliance re- 'pugnant to the will. I tremble but to 'think how my peace would be wounded, 'was I compelled to dwell even with your 'mother under ſuch diſagreeable circum- 'ſtances.'

Farmer

Farmer Johnſon, having taken his rounds amongſt his labourers in the field, was returning home, through a path adjoining to that the lovers had taken, and which was divided only by a hedge of hawthorn; a voice unexpectedly ſaluting his ear, he ſtopped, and looked on every ſide in order to diſcover whence it proceeded. The ornamental part of the captain's coat glittering with uncommon luſtre, the ſun-beams darting directly upon it, ſoon attracted his obſervation; and the ſilly lout, by making himſelf unſeaſonably viſible, became a mortifying interruption to their converſation. 'O miſs,' ſaid the honeſt farmer, 'I had a 'letter from London, yeſterday, from your 'father, mighty full of queſtions concern-'ing your health and happineſs, he's a good 'gentleman I'll be anſwerable, and a lov-'ing father, for he ſays, he can no longer 'live without you, and begs the favour, that 'is his honor's humble word to me, to ſee 'you ſafe to that great place which I never 'did ſee in all my born days, but ſhall, to 'ſerve you, go to it now in my old age.'

This

This news was equally unwelcome to this gentle pair, but as the farmer continued plodding on only a few paces before them, Mr. Finch was too prudent to mention the concern he felt, leſt he ſhould not only betray the ſecret of his heart to his neighbour, but have it betrayed to more important ears. He indulged the pleaſing thought, as they moved on in ſilent meditation, that miſs Forteſcue would be removed by this ſummons of her father, at an equal diſtance from the baronet as himſelf, and his own father releaſed from the obligation of promoting the cauſe of that tremendous youth, as the lady would then be under the immediate direction and diſpoſition of a ſuperior power. On their arrival at the houſe of Mr. Johnſon, miſs impatiently ran over the contents of her letter, and found, by her father's importunity, that her ſtay in Gloceſterſhire muſt be ſhort. There was no oppoſing this dire command, notwithſtanding the ſevere conſtraint her compliance with it, would lay upon her inclination. Some

tears

tears involuntarily forced their paſſage, which ſhe placed to Mrs. Finch's account, as a ſeparation from her would be a ſtroke ſhe ſaid ſhe was unable to ſuſtain. 'Better 'had it been for me,' ſaid ſhe, 'never to 'have experienced her almoſt maternal 'indulgence, than to be ſo ſuddenly torn 'from it for ever. To the care of my fa-'ther's houſe-keeper ſhall I again be 'committed, who is far from having the 'natural feelings of tenderneſs. She is un-'qualified for every taſk, but domeſtic 'drudgery, both by the ſervility of her 'diſpoſition, and want of education, yet 'ſhe muſt be my conſtant, my only com-'panion, and ſupply to the ſenſible, the 'well-bred, and engaging characters, your 'mother invariably fills with dignity and 'eaſe. To what purpoſe has my mind 'been enlarged, but like the knowledge 'imparted to the firſt female, by the fatal 'forbidden apple, to perceive my own ig-'norance, and the inſufficiency of that 'woman's capacity, with whom I muſt 'ever dwell?'

'And

'And must miss Fortescue,' said Mr. Finch, 'hereafter become inaccessible to all 'her friends? when I rejoin my corps, 'whose quarters are not far from London, 'must I never presume to enquire after 'her health? My visits, perhaps, would 'offend, as their motive could not be long 'concealed from the penetration of Mr. 'Fortescue. My tender solicitude would 'betray me; nor could I preserve the 'cool behaviour of a common acquaint-'ance, glowing as my heart now does, 'with affectionate respect. Instruct me, 'dear miss Caroline, to bear this evil 'with fortitude, and hard though the les-'son will be if you will, condescend to be 'my teacher, I will not only love but adopt 'your precepts.'

'I, sir, am but ill qualified for instruc-'tion,' sighed the lovely miss Caroline, 'especially where submission and resigna-'nation are wanting. They are virtues I 'can hardly boast in common with my 'species, and confess that I never more,

'than

'than on the preſent occaſion, ſtood in
'need of their ſupport. Your mother, your
'valuable mother, ſir, recurs continually
'upon my mind, and convinces me, that I
'am both a weak and a frail being, un-
'equal to trials, unequal to misfortune.
'But if you pleaſe, we will dwell no long-
'er on ſuch diſagreeable themes.' 'I am
'not,' ſaid Mr. Finch, 'ſo far maſter of
'myſelf, as to forbear making a per-
'haps ungenerous uſe of the happy op-
'portunity now given me, of learning my
'deſtiny. I am impelled by that uncon-
'querable affection, by which my heart is
'informed, to intreat you to tell me, what
'my future expectations muſt be. I am
'above the mean, contemptible artifice,
'of engaging you into any other connec-
'tion with my preſent circumſtances, than
'juſt giving me hope; if I could but flatter
'myſelf that I am not diſagreeable to you,
'my greateſt, my moſt dreadful difficulty,
'would be ſurmounted.' 'If that ſatisfac-
'tion will ſecure your peace,' returned
the innocent maid,' 'be aſſured, that you
'are

'are far, very far, from being diſliked by 'me.' 'Think me not encroaching, my 'dear miſs Forteſcue,' ſaid the captain, 'only add, that I have nothing to appre-'hend on ſir William Brightley's account, 'and I will preſume no farther.' 'My 'knowledge,' replied miſs Forteſcue, 'of 'that gentleman, is inſufficient to bias me 'in his favour; nor do I believe he could 'have obtained my approbation, by even 'the moſt uninterrupted aſſiduity. I ſhall 'never, in all probability, behold him more, 'nor do I wiſh ſo to do.' 'It is enough,' ſaid Mr. Finch, 'I will be ſatisfied with 'your unprecedented goodneſs, and flatter 'myſelf, that you will be reduced, thereby, 'to beſtow a kind thought, upon a man 'who will never ceaſe to remember you 'in the moſt reſpectful manner.'

They were now within ſight of Mr. Finch's habitation, and perceived the benevolent maſter watching their return. Miſs Forteſcue burſt into tears, upon entering the parlour, to the aſtoniſhment and

concern of thoſe good friends, who beſought her, tenderly, to inform them, to what cauſe they ſhould aſcribe her uneaſineſs. 'I am almoſt aſhamed, my dear 'madam,' ſaid miſs Caroline, 'to confeſs, that it is owing to a ſummons I 'have received from my father to return 'immediately to London. It has, certainly, an unnatural appearance, to even 'wiſh to remain from under his protection and countenance, but you, I 'know, would excuſe me, if you could 'conceive the life of obſcurity and ſolitude, to which I ſhall be conſigned, notwithſtanding my abode will be in the 'great metropolis.'

Mrs. Finch was ſincerely affected by this intelligence, and, for the firſt time, was heard to complain. 'Our ſatisfactions, my 'dear,' ſaid ſhe, addreſſing her huſband, 'I think have of late, dropped off in quick 'ſucceſſions, and when our Frank is obliged to leave us, this village, which a few 'months ago, could boaſt a polite and 'ami-

'amicable ſociety, will become an al-
'moſt dreary uninhabited waſte, and our
'amuſements will, I fear, loſe their for-
'mer power of pleaſing.' 'You are a
'wicked murmurer,' replied Mr. Finch,
ſmiling, 'for have we not yet an amiable
'pair left amongſt us? As for this good
'child,' continued he, 'I am only ſurpriſ-
'ed we have ſo long enjoyed her company,
'and hope ſhe will have no reaſon to
'regret a change of ſituation, which ſhe
'might hourly expect. I have a notion,
'her father begins to think her marriage-
'able, and has got ſome ſwain in his eye.
'What ſay you, Caroline, are you willing
'to obey your father's command in ſuch a
'caſe?' 'I hope ſir,' returned miſs For-
teſcue, 'my father will not require an im-
'plicit obedience from me, but condeſcend,
'in ſome meaſure, to conſult my inclina-
'tions, in an affair of ſuch importance.'
'Heyday,' replied Mr. Finch, 'what new
'fangled notions are theſe? What, would
'a girl in hanging-ſleeves, be conſulted in
'the choice of a huſband?' 'Sir,' return-

ed miſs Porteſcue, with ſome warmth, 'I am too young to chuſe, I am too young to be choſen; that is a maxim I have ever adopted, and will ever maintain.' 'O brave,' ſaid the jocoſe Mr. Finch, 'you will certainly run reſtive on your father's hands, he had better commit you to my management.' By ſuch kind of good humoured methods, did this worthy man endeavour to divert his wife and her little friend, but without ſucceſs, the traces of ſorrow were viſible in each of their countenances, and deep furrows were made in the young captain's heart.

The time of her departure approached apace, and the farmer made his appearance mounted and bolted, as on a former occaſion, for her conveyance to meet the ſtage, before ſhe could prevail upon herſelf to make any preparation. Her clothes were then packed up in haſte, and the laſt adieu ſpoken in broken and precipitate accents. The lover attended his miſtreſs to the inn, and waited the arrival of that coach

coach which was to convey her from his sight, perhaps for ever, with an agitated heart, and put her into it, with an affliction too big for utterance. He stood upon an eminence until even the cloud of dust was dispersed that the carriage raised, and then returned with a solemn dejected pace, unaccompanied, save by a simple plough-boy, unto the house of his father. Mr. Finch soon perceived that his son was caught by his little favourite, and secretly rejoiced, from that observation, at her removal. He considered her as superior in fortune to whatever a child of his could expect, and was far from imagining, that she had made so deep an impression upon his naturally gay volatile disposition, as she had in reality done.

Mr. Forteſcue received her with kindness, and joined with Rebecca, in acknowledging, that she was much improved. 'Caroline,' said he, 'I shall to mor-'row have company to dinner, I therefore 'charge you to dress to the best advan-

'tage, as they are at preſent, ſtrangers 'to you.'

The apartment allotted for this young lady was in partnerſhip with Mrs. Rebecca, which was an extreme mortification to miſs Forteſcue, as ſhe was ſenſible ſhe would not only prove a ſpy upon her actions, but interrupt, by her impertinent and unmeaning chat, many an agreeable reflection ſhe ſhould wiſh to indulge.

No ſooner did the light dawn in upon this indefatigable domeſtic, than ſhe aroſe to prepare, for the grand entertainment, her maſter had ordered, and which was ſubmitted to her direction and management, without controul. At eight o'clock ſhe diſturbed her young lady, notwithſtanding the fatigue of her journey, to aſſiſt her in, or at leaſt, be a ſpectator of, her notable performance. The kitchen was the place appointed for her breakfaſting, in which repaſt Mrs. Rebecca was a participater. The old farmer was gone out, under the conduct

conduct of a raw lad, her father's foot-boy, to ſee the Monument and the Lions, the only things, he ſaid, he had any curioſity about. Down ſat this young lady with great diſſatisfaction, to the ordinary table, provided for the occaſion, and was ſupplied with ordinary tea, and butter of the rankeſt kind. Her palate had long been diſuſed to ſuch unpleaſant flavours, nor would her tender ſtomach digeſt the unwholeſome food. Her heart underwent the ſevereſt pangs, at this proſpect of wretchedneſs, nor did ſhe conceive it poſſible ſhe could ever again be inured to it. She was not unmindful of her father's commands, with reſpect to her perſonal adornment, and made, as ſhe was wont, a very pretty, elegant appearance. At two o'clock, the rap of conſequence denoted the arrival of the grand viſitants, which proved to be an elderly lame gentleman, his lady, a maſculine, moroſe, haughty looking woman, a young flirting, plain girl, his daughter, and a fribbliſh youth of eighteen or twenty, his ſon and heir. Mr.

teſcue's wig of eminence adorned his brows, which ſeldom ſaw the light but on dark occaſions in Weſtminſter-hall. He received his very good friends with the air of a courtier, and taking his daughter by the hand, preſented her to them ſeverally, under the appellation of the girl he had mentioned. Mrs. Macpherſon, the name of this family of noble and ancient deſcent in the North, ſaid, the young lady had too much of the peaſant in her countenance, but poſſibly that might wear off, by a few months continuance in the town air. Miſs caſt abundance of ſuperſtitious glances at her, but did not condeſcend to honor her by a verbal notice. The youth, ſtared at her with the confidence of a bum-bailiff, and the old gentleman gave her, once in the whole viſit, a ſignificant nod. Miſs Forteſcue, was vaſtly puzzled to what cauſe to impute their ſtrange behaviour, but ſhe was obliged to truſt to time for the unraveling of theſe unaccountable proceedings, as Rebecca was as cloſe as the grave, and miſs's ſpirit above applying

to

to her for information. The next morning the ſame old gentleman ambled to breakfaſt, with her father, and was ſhut up ſeveral hours with him in private conference. The reſult of which will be communicated to the reader in due ſeaſon.

During theſe tranſactions, the travellers enjoyed, in the gay ſcenes of Paris, a continual ſucceſſion of pleaſing amuſements. The airy politeneſs, the parade of compliment, and the propenſity to gallantry, and uninterrupted mirth, that prevailed amongſt this volatile, light-fed people, pleaſed Mrs. Shelburne beyond expreſſion. She entered into the ſpirit of the country, and, becauſe the natives were unreſerved, ſhe threw off all reſtraint, and painted patched, and coquetted with the beſt of them. Miſs Shelburne was frequently hurt by her mother's imprudent ſallies, both in converſation and conduct, but the invariable eaſe, decorum, and complaiſant diſpoſition of lady Brightley, ſupported her under, and by degrees diſpelled, the chagrin

ance became the moſt graceful to her in the whole twenty-four, and ſhe received their devoirs and adulation with more pleaſure than her daily bread. They ſeparately congratulated themſelves on their *bonnadreſſe*, and doubted not but they were in the high road to receiving not only perſonal, but pecuniary, favours, from this unpoliſhed illiterate Engliſhwoman. She enjoyed the happineſs of being admired, for a long time, unſuſpected, by her daughter, and the reſt of the party, and without the privity of any one, ſave the pliant handmaid, whoſe friendly offers miſs Shelburne's prudence rejected, though in the greateſt extremity.

It happened, moſt unfortunately, one morning, that Mrs. Shelburne, intending to favour each with a private interview, as uſual, for want of due attention in the hour of appointment, Mr. Friſeur was ſurpriſed by his competitor at the feet of his languiſhing beauty, offering up the grateful incenſe of flattery to this benign deity.

deity. The proſtrate lover aroſe, and darted a revengeful glance at the unſeaſonable intruder, who, returning it in kind, an altercation ſucceeded, which riſing very high, at length alarmed lady Brigheley, miſs Shelburne, and the young gentlemen, who inſtantly repaired to the ſcene of action. Weapons they had none, either offenſive or defenſive, except thoſe occupied in their ſeveral profeſſions, which they had handled, during their verbal fray, with ſo much dexterity, that, before the young gentlemen could interpoſe, the room was beſtrewed with the foretops, bags, and mercury-wings of the furious opponents. The appearance of ſo many genteel perſons, diſconcerted the combatants, and inſtantaneouſly cooled their courage, they picked up their diſpoiled ornaments, and endeavoured to make a retreat a la mode de François, but ſir William, with a politeneſs truly Engliſh, preſumed to detain theſe gentlemen, in order to be informed of the merits of their proceedings; but finding, on enquiry, how little their examination would

would redound to the honor of Mrs. Shelburne, and in order to ſpare miſs as much mortification as poſſible, he rang for a ſervant to ſhew them the door, a grace he thought beneath the dignity of his own character. This adventure, as it could not be concealed, induced them to leave Paris abruptly, to avoid the ridicule, one woman's folly and indiſcretion would draw upon them all. Mrs. Shelburne was ſufficiently puniſhed by this ſtep, and remained ſullen during a whole two days journey.

Regular hours, light regimen, and in general, hearts eaſe, contributed to reſtore to health and chearfulneſs, the delicate miſs Lucy Shelburne, whoſe mind was no leſs tender than her conſtitution. Mr. Stevens enjoyed the ſatisfaction of her converſation, without reſtraint, and was her conſtant companion, when confined by indiſpoſition, diſinclination for viſiting, or over fatigue. Friendſhip, in the moſt diſintereſted and extenſive ſenſe, they ſcrupled

not to acknowledge for each other, but diſclaimed the power of the blind, but unerring archer; notwithſtanding this ſelf-deceit, their hearts were irreparably tranſfixed by the keeneſt arrow in his quiver.

After our little company had viſited ſeveral provinces of note, ſubject to the Grande Monarque, they took the route to Italy; where ſir William was as much diſſatisfied at the inacceſſibleneſs of the fair Italians, as he had been diſguſted, by the other extreme, in their neighbours the French. The love of his own country was ſtill predominant, and the cuſtoms thereof revered by him. 'There, only, Stevens,' he would ſay, 'is mediocrity practiſed; 'there, only, is a proper intercourſe of the 'ſpecies; our females are as free from Gal-'lic folly and levity, as they deſervedly en-'joy an exemption from Italic reſtraint. 'How finely are our laws calculated for 'their advantage, as well as ours! their 'grievances redreſſed, and their liberty un-'infringed! The parent does not aſſume the

'the unnatural authority of hurrying their 'children to a wretched nunnery, to waſte 'that exiſtence, undeſired by their off-'ſpring, and conferred upon them with-'out their conſent, merely to prevent the 'reduction of the family eſtate by too 'many heirs, and perpetuate the illuſtrious 'folly of an airy marqui or comte. My 'heart,' he would add, 'ſtill retains its fa-'vourable impreſſion of your ſiſter, nor ſhall 'ſhe be long unviſited, when I return to my 'endeared native ſoil. Our annals would 'have been unfurniſhed with many noble 'pages, had we adopted the ſalique law, 'as then no Elizabeth would have graced 'the Engliſh throne.'

They made a longer ſtay at Rome and Venice, than at any other capitol; the baronet being particularly critical in his obſervations on the antiquities of the one, and the beauties of the other. The churches, the ruinous ſtructures, the almoſt animated performances of the ſeveral maſters in ſculpture, and the inimitable paintings of a Raphael, a Titian, a Guido, and other incomparable artiſts,

artists, alternately engaged his intense admiration; nor did men, manners, and the peculiar polity of each constitution escape him. He was usually quick in his perception of the justice, as of the illegality of many of their established maxims, but despotism was ever irreconcilable with his sentiments and approbation. Can it be agreeable to equity, he would say, that a prince, however weak, tyrannic, or inhuman, should be invested with authority over, not only the property, but lives of his subjects? Shall a man become obnoxious, merely from opulence or popularity, to his displeasure? Shall his life be exposed to the hazard and continual apprehensions of being torn from his family, imprisoned and tortured, even to death, to gratify the malice, ambition or avarice, of that sovereign, who is bound by every tye of candour and honour, to be his protector? If a king is to be considered as the father of his people, is not the destruction of his children, an action no less repugnant to nature than humanity? The slave in the mine

evil temptations so manifold, and almost inevitable.

Brightley-hall was frequently mentioned by him, with pleasure and approbation. Nor was the remembrance, that his travels were to terminate in that little village, in the smallest degree, either mortifying or painful to him. Such a companion as Mr. Finch he had not found in a foreigner, of any denomination, nor so valuable a female as the wife of that amiable friend. He promised himself infinite satisfaction, in comparing his own remarks with that worthy gentleman's; as also, having his prejudices removed, and the impropriety of his sentiments corrected, by a judgment no less clear and impartial, than candid and humane.

On this friendly party's arrival at the Hague, they were met by an English packet, replete with news of consequence to, at least, one member of their community. Mr. Stevens was agreeably surprised with the

the following letter from his mother, inclosed in a cover to lady Brightley.

'Dear Frank,

'IF I could consider riches as the reward 'of the just, notwithstanding they are 'diffused, by the all-wise distributor, indis'criminately on all men; I should invite 'you to return, to receive the recompence 'of your filial piety, and patient resigna'tion to the dispensations of providence. 'Your grandfather, my child, is no more, 'and has been profuse in his provision for 'your sister and you, in his last moments, 'though he so long denied you a bare sub'sistence before. It is impossible for me to 'tell you the large possessions you may now 'call your own, as the plate and jewels you 'are intitled to are of an immense value, 'The estate bequeathed you is three thou'sand pounds a year, and, to your sister, 'eighteen thousand pounds. I flatter my'self that I shall have the happiness to find 'my children as far from a blameable ela'tion in their prosperity, as they have hap-

'pily

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ſumed ſhe might give him joy of ſome extraordinary pleaſing event. 'I acknowledge,' 'replied Mr. Stevens, 'I have cauſe to re-'joice, and have a juſt ſenſe of your ladyſhip's 'grateful congratulations, but muſt beg 'to be excuſed communicating the news I 'have received, at this juncture. It is the 'firſt indulgence of ſo ſtrange, and, in ap-'pearance, abſurd, a nature, I have ever 'wiſhed to be granted me; but I will, here-'after, convince my friends, that reaſon, 'not caprice, ſuggeſted this particular in-'clination.' 'We are,' returned lady Brightley, looking round, 'I dare believe all of 'us exempt from impertinent curioſity, 'and, therefore, willingly (I take upon me 'to be the voice of the company) tolerate 'you in your preſent humour, on condition 'that we are, one day, permitted to ſhare 'your happineſs, by a friendly ſympathy.' Mr. Stevens bowed, with a grateful heart, and withdrew, in order to recollect himſelf, his ideas having undergone a total diſſipation by his ſurpriſe and joy. The adverſe ſtrokes of fortune can be ſupported even

by

by the greateſt minds, with more propriety and decorum than the reverſe, as we are by the latter thrown off our guard, and have ſo many dormant paſſions awakened, which impel us to betray the weak ſide of our characters, and require the utmoſt circumſpection to diſcover, through the thick ſhade of vanity and ſelf-love, by which they are ſurrounded, as well as reſolution to reſtrain them, within proper bounds, and is undoubtedly the moſt difficult talk of human nature.

Mr. Stevens had a check upon his tranſports, though it had no other foundation than in his imagination, as it was not in the power of fortune to give him felicity, unleſs in participation with miſs Shelburne.

In all the private interviews he had enjoyed with that young lady, he had never made her acquainted with his ſentiments. Honor and poverty had kept him ſilent, but now that he was, by a change of circumſtance, authorized, as it were, to declare

clare his affection freely, the diffidence and doubts inſeparable from a pure and diſintereſted paſſion, took poſſeſſion of his heart. Should ſhe diſlike him, ſhould he be refuſed, were apprehenſions that obtruded themſelves; and it was ſome time before he could compoſe theſe ſeveral agitations.

The remembrance of ſir William's prejudice, with reſpect to his ſiſter, was not forgotten by him; and he, at laſt, determined to engage Mr. Finch's aſſiſtance in carrying a ſcheme againſt the baronet's heart into execution. Her family was by no means inferior to that young gentleman's, and miſs Stevens was, by her grandfather's generoſity, rendered ſomewhat worthy of him in point of fortune; he, therefore, wrote to Mr. Finch, and, after informing him of his grandfather's death, introduced ſir William's whimſical attachment to his ſiſter, and begged the favour of that gentleman to give the baronet an opportunity of ſeeing her, by inviting her to Brightley a few days before

their return, without mentioning her name for a ſhort period, or diſcovering her circumſtances; ſubmitting the conſequence to chance, or, to ſpeak more unfaſhionably, the direction of providence.

Mr. Finch immediately gave into the ſcheme propoſed by Mr. Stevens, and engaged the young lady's company, previous to the meeting of his friends. Mrs. Stevens herſelf declined the invitation, but moſt willingly ſent her daughter, in compliance with the worthy officer's requeſt.

Mr. Stevens's heart was ſtrongly divided, between his deſire of practiſing a little honeſt artifice, in order to diſcover the baronet's real ſentiments of his ſiſter on an interview, in the character of a ſtranger, and declaring his long concealed paſſion for miſs Shelburne.

To part with that lady in London, his inclination for her unrevealed, and, poſſibly, expoſing her to applications, which (unen-

(unengaged as he imagined her) ſhe might be induced to approve, was running a riſk of too great conſequence, not to cauſe him the utmoſt perplexity. Lady Brightley agreeably relieved him from this ſolicitude, by telling Mrs. Shelburne, that ſhe hoped miſs Lucy's father would not make the leaſt heſitation to oblige her with her daughter's company for a few months, in return for the long journey ſhe had taken on her account.

They ſoon arrived ſafe in London, and Mr. Shelburne profeſſed himſelf under the higheſt obligations to lady Brightley, for her kind care of his Lucy, and immediately complied with her ladyſhip's requeſt, with reſpect to taking her into Gloceſterſhire. Mr. Finch was appriſed of their proceedings and intentions, by Mr. Stevens, and went forth many miles to meet them, in their return to the village, accompanied by all its inhabitants, except the curate and his lady. The countenance of each attending ruſtic was enlightened with joy unfeigned,

feigned, for the return of this worthy lady, and her amiable ſon. Miſs Stevens had been arrived at Mr. Finch's only three days preceding this happy occaſion, and accompanied that gentleman and his lady in their friendly excurſion.

She was dreſſed to the utmoſt advantage mourning would admit of, and her complexion received additional beauty from the diſmal contraſt by which it was ſurrounded. lady Brightley was the firſt who perceived the affectionate cavalcade, and, on Mr. and Mrs. Finch's ſaluting her with ſome obliging compliments, expreſſed a grateful ſurpriſe at this unexpected mark of their friendſhip, and the attachment of the villagers. 'We,' returned that gentleman, 'congratulate ourſelves on this happy re-'peopling our little retreat, as your arrival 'will reſtore that wonted felicity we always 'enjoyed in your preſence.'

'You are very gallant,' replied lady Brightley, ſmiling, 'but pray what young 'lady

'lady is that I ſee?' 'Oh,' ſaid Mr. Finch, 'it is a little friend of mine, whoſe merit, 'I flatter myſelf, will equally recommend 'her to your ladyſhip's favour an; honour, 'I can aſſure you, ſhe is extremely ambi- 'tious of. Come hither, my girl,' continued he, addreſſing miſs Stevens, 'and 'ſpeak for yourſelf.' The young lady advanced, with a becoming modeſty, and exchanged an affectionate look with her beloved brother, whoſe fraternal emotions were with difficulty ſuppreſſed; and, had not the company's attention been drawn off by other objects, could not poſſibly have eſcaped their obſervation. Lady Brightley ſaid ſeveral polite things to miſs Stevens, and then, addreſſing Mr. Finch, 'Tell 'me,' ſaid ſhe, 'by what magic you have 'allured this third agreeable female to our 'obſcure village, and why I do not ſee 'miſs Forteſcue in this little train?' 'We 'have loſt that amiable girl,' replied Mrs. Finch, 'ſome time, and ſo far are my af- 'fections engaged by her, that I almoſt 'regret her abſence as much as that of my

'own child, who has been obliged, with-
'in theſe laſt two months, to rejoin his
'corps.' 'That is very unlucky,' ſaid ſir
William, 'I was in hopes we ſhould have
'reached Brightley before his departure.'
'What! no mention of miſs Forteſcue
'from you, ſir knight?' ſaid Mr. Finch,
archly, 'and have the united charms of
'youth, beauty, and innocence, been in-
'ſufficient to ſubdue your inſenſibility? If
'ſo, I pronounce you invulnerable.' 'My
'time for ſighing is not yet come, ſir,' re-
turned the baronet, 'but I am fully per-
'ſuaded, nevertheleſs, that there is ſuch a
'day in ſtore for me.' The coach then
drove on to Mr. Finch's habitation, where
all the company alighted, and ſpent the
evening agreeably together. Among other
converſation, it was debated, whether miſs
Shelburne ſhould make a viſit, or not, at
the curate's. The gentlemen ſtrongly op-
poſed it, from an opinion, that the treat-
ment that lady had received from her aunt,
and by her uncle's paſſive acquieſcence, ſhe

was

was diſcharged from every dutiful and reſpectful tye.

The ladies ſentiments by no means coincided herein, as a breach of propriety in Mr. and Mrs. Slaughter, they could not conſider as an authority for a breach of duty in miſs Shelburne; and therefore it was reſolved, by a majority, that ſhe ſhould make a viſit at the parſonage-houſe the next morning.

Sir William bore but little part in this converſation. The elegance of miſs Stevens's manners, her blooming complexion, and ſtriking reſemblance of his friend, engaging his whole attention. Had ſhe not appeared in the gloomy trappings which cuſtom enjoins ſurviving relations to aſſume, in compliment to the memory of departed friends, he would have challenged her as the undoubted ſiſter of his much eſteemed Frank; but the circumſtance of a ſable habit puzzled him, and inclined him to believe, that ſhe was brought to Bright-

ley, and careſſed with ſuch peculiar marks of approbation, on the young captain's account; a ſuggeſtion by no means pleaſing to him. He was deſirous of enquiring her name and family, but apprehended the raillery of Mr. Finch, who, he was aſſured, would impute his curioſity to an intereſted account.

On their arrival at the hall, the baronet aſked his friend abundance of queſtions concerning this fair ſtranger, and added, 'I ſhould, Frank, have infallibly conclu-'ded ſhe was a near relation of yours, had 'not her dreſs been a contradiction to ſuch 'a conjecture.' Mr. Stevens attended, with pleaſure, to ſir William's converſation, and flattered himſelf, that he perceived ſome favourable ſymptoms for the ſucceſs of his ſcheme, in the young gentleman's unaccuſtomed ſolicitude, with regard to his ſiſter. 'There is,' continued the baronet, 'an uncommon ſimilitude in your 'features, and your voices are no leſs con-'ſonant. Surely it is amazing, that ſtrangers

ſhould

'ſhould have ſo ſtrong a reſemblance of 'each other!' Perhaps, ſir,' returned Mr. Stevens, 'the likeneſs you take notice of, 'between that young lady and me, may 'conſiſt alone in your imagination, nor may 'ſtrike lady Brightley or miſs Shelburne.' 'Now I recollect,' ſaid her ladyſhip, 'you 'are miſtaken, I am quite of my ſon's opi- 'nion; for, excepting the feminine ſoft- 'neſs, and beauty of her complexion, the 'faces are exactly the ſame. What ſay you, 'miſs Lucy, do not you think ſo?' 'Your 'ladyſhip's ſentiments are mine,' reply'd miſs Shelburne, 'as well on this, as moſt 'other occaſions.'

The next morning ſir William made an early viſit to Mr. Finch, under the pre-tence of talking over foreign ſcenes; but that gentleman, wilfully unmindful of the thin diſguiſe, demanded, to whoſe account he ſhould place ſo unuſual a favour, as the company of ſir William Brightley was, at ſeven o'clock in the morning, unattended by his ſhadow, Mr. Stevens? The baro-

net was visibly disconcerted by this abrupt interrogative, and replied, he little expected such an observation from Mr. Finch. 'Guilty, upon my honour,' returned the facetious gentleman; 'the infallible marks 'of guilt are upon you. Come, come, 'confess; and I promise you shall not find 'much difficulty in obtaining absolution.' 'I do confess, sir,' replied sir William, 'that I am astonished at your behaviour; 'but you are very welcome to divert your-'self at my expence.'

'Serious too!' resumed Mr. Finch, 'that 'alone is confirmation. O' my word, the 'little archer has been very dexterous. 'Well, and how do you feel? very, very 'sick? poor sir William!' 'I am glad to 'see you so merry, sir,' returned the baronet (rising, apparently mortified) 'but as 'this disposition but ill suits with the plea-'sure and improvement I promised myself 'from your conversation, I will wish you 'a good morning, and renew my visit at 'some other time.'

'And

'And can you leave me,' ſaid Mr. Finch, 'without the end of your viſitation's being 'anſwered? I will ring for the ladies, to 'make you amends for the mortification I 'have given you, and, if you behave well, 'will be a generous confidant.'

The enterance of Mrs. Finch, and miſs Stevens, prevented the baronet's reply, and the preſence of the latter ſoon diſpelled the little chagrin he had contracted from Mr. Finch's unexpected raillery. In ſhort, he that morning gazed his heart away; and, by the perſonal impreſſion of miſs Stevens, was the memory of miſs Stevens eraſed, and his deſire of viſiting a certain cottage in Wiltſhire, totally obliterated. The ladies retiring to dreſs for dinner, alone ſuggeſted the recollection of the time of day to him, and conſtrained him, moſt reluctantly, to return to his friends at the hall. Love, the irreſiſtible, the all-prevalent, and all-mighty, overſpread the baronet's benign countenance with a penſive caſt, and, no leſs involuntarily, than inſtantaneouſly, oc-

caſioned a marvellous change in his diſpoſition. His volubility, nay, his friendſhip became, in a degree, a ſacrifice to this newly inſpired paſſion.

Mr. Stevens, hitherto the eſſential to his happineſs, without whoſe participation, whatever was fair or grateful to the eye, pleaſing or attractive to the ear, rational or entertaining to the mind, were incompleat and diſregarded; was now ſhunned by him, with the ſame induſtry he was wont to ſeek and ſolicit his company; and the envious conſideration of his happier lot, in unreſervedly enjoying the converſation of the woman he admired, and free from the unkind raillery himſelf had ſuſtained, ſtruck deep into his heart. He made a ſhort dinner; and immediately retired to his apartment. The tender lady Brightley was alarmed at this change, and beſought Mr. Stevens to follow her ſon, and inform himſelf of the cauſe of his apparent uneaſineſs.

This

This gentleman, far from conceiving that his preſence, inſtead of leſſening, would aggravate his friend's perplexity, immediately complied with her ladyſhip's requeſt, and entered the baronet's ſtudy with his wonted familiarity.

Sir William aroſe, with a diſordered aſpect, and enquired, if he brought a meſſage from her ladyſhip? Confounded and aſtoniſhed at this reception, Mr. Stevens retreated ſome few paces, and, bowing low, ſaid, he would, for the future, remember, that ſir William Brightley's retirement was to be ſacred.

'Frank,' ſaid the baronet, ſtruck by his behaviour, 'can you forgive me? I am 'petulant, unreaſonable, and, with reſpect 'to my treatment of you, highly blame-'able. But I am ill, uneaſy, and whimſi-'cal, and beg to be indulged a few mo-'ments in my own thoughts, and will 'wait upon my mother and you preſently.' Mr. Stevens retired without attempting to

reply,

reply, wounded in his pride, his affection, and friendſhip. Unconſcious, as he was, of every intentional offence, unaccuſtomed to encounter a clouded brow, and, uniform as he had always found ſir William in his attachment, ſurpriſed, mortified, and ſhocked him. He had heard that lady Brightley was ſubject to melancholy attacks, and began, on reflection, to pity, rather than condemn, his altered friend, and feared for his intellects, in as great a degree, as the baronet's guardians had once done for her ladyſhip's. He endeavoured to compoſe himſelf before he returned to the parlour, to prevent this affectionate mother's anxiety being increaſed, and determined to conſult miſs Shelburne, the firſt opportunity, in what manner to proceed.

Lady Brightley enquired, with fond ſolicitude, concerning her darling ſon, and Mr. Stevens replied, that he did not imagine the young gentleman was otherwiſe ill, than from the fatigue of his journey, and

and a reſtleſs night. he heard him mention he had paſſed, and hoped a few hours repoſe would perfectly reſtore him. This equivocal anſwer only half ſatisfied the good lady's tender doubts and apprehenſions; and, finding herſelf diſinclined for converſation, ſhe retired alſo, begging ſhe might be informed when her ſon returned to their company.

So ſoon as her ladyſhip was withdrawn, Mr. Stevens communicated his fears and obſervations to his admired miſs Shelburne, who was ſincerely affected by them, and joined her earneſt wiſhes with Mr. Stevens's, that Heaven would be pleaſed to avert ſo great a calamity.

Mr. Stevens found his mind ſo ſoftened by his friendly concern for the baronet, and mortified by the affront he had received, as to be unequal to the happy opportunity he enjoyed, of declaring his ſchemes and affection to miſs Shelburne, or to the longer concealment of them. "I am, madam," ſaid he,

he, 'unable to preſerve a falſe character in 'your ſight, if I have your permiſſion to 'reveal myſelf. How I have hitherto elu- 'ded your penetration I know not; but 'that young female, now at Mr. Finch's, 'is, in reality, my ſiſter, brought there 'privately for a purpoſe I will explain to 'you, if you will vouchſafe your attention.'

Miſs Shelburne was no leſs ſurpriſed at, than curious to learn Mr. Stevens's motives for ſuch extraordinary behaviour, and, therefore, lent a willing ear to his relation of the baronet's imaginary approbation of that young lady, his grandfather's deceaſe, and the advancement of his own fortune. 'Since you have, madam,' continued Mr. Stevens, 'indulged me with ſo large a ſhare 'of your attentive regard, I muſt intreat 'you to permit me to treſpaſs a little longer 'upon it, to tell a tale, which my eyes, my 'actions, have told already.' The converſation now became intereſting; the lady bluſhed, looked downward, but attempted not the ſmalleſt interruption.

'From

'From the firſt moment I beheld you,' reſumed Mr. Stevens 'you engaged my ut-
'moſt tender conſideration. The various
'turns of your, now happily, ſubdued
'diſorder, have as variouſly ſhook my
'peace and happineſs; but my honor, pru-
'dence, and generoſity, compelled me to
'a painful ſilence. Not that I drew the
'leaſt preſumption from my grand-father's
'favour, with reſpect to miſs Shelburne's
'heart, but as I flatter myſelf if I am not
'ſo miſerable as to be diſapproved by her,
'it will be a ſanction for me with her pa-
'rents, who have an undoubted right to
'be conſulted on ſuch an occaſion.' Miſs Shelburne making no reply, 'On you,
'madam, alone my fate depends; for un-
'leſs you condeſcend to encourage an ap-
'plication to your friends, I muſt give up
'my every expectation. Could I deſcribe
'the feelings of my heart when you were
'hurried to town on my account, and all
'that I endured, previous to your letter to
'lady Brightley, your compaſſion at leaſt
'would be on my ſide. But alas! muſt I

'expect

'expect only compaſſion from miſs Shel-
'burne?'

'Sir', replied that amiable young lady,
'as I deſpiſe affectation, and, perhaps,
'have been guilty of ſome little indiſcre-
'tions which put my approbation of you
'beyond a doubt, I will dare to acknow-
'ledge, that I am not blind to the merits
'of your character; be it your part to re-
'member, I have a father and a mother,
'and it ſhall be mine, not to be diſobe-
'dient to their command, or deficient in
'gratitude to Mr. Stevens, for the com-
'pliment he pays me.' 'Kind miſs Shel-
'burne,' returned the tranſported lover,
'your conduct is uniformly good, benevo-
'lent and gracious! May I then preſume
'to engage lady Brightley, and ſir Wil-
'liam's intereſt?' 'I will rely upon Mr.
'Stevens's honor and diſcretion,' replied
miſs Shelburne, 'for if I miſtake him not,
'he cannot be ungenerous, or commit an
'impropriety.'

During

During this interview of the lovers, the baronet was in a diſagreeable ſituation. He was ſenſible he had treated his friend unworthily, and given pain to a heart he highly eſteemed. 'How poor a figure', ſaid he, 'do I make in my own eyes, for 'my captious, unreaſonable folly! If it is 'love by which I am actuated, to me it 'proves a narrower, not an enlarger of the 'mind. What a mean diſpoſition do I 'poſſeſs to be capable of ſpurning a tried, 'approved, and valuable friend! but I will 'immediately ſeek him, and atone for my 'paſt behaviour. 'Yet why,' reſumed he, 'ſhould I ſuffer an inclination for a ſtranger 'to ſubdue that deſire I have ſo long enter-'tained and flattered Stevens with, the ex-'ecution of becoming his brother? for how-'ever amiable this ſtranger, ſhe cannot excel 'his ſiſter. I will not, therefore, yield to a 'ſoftneſs that will deprive me of the con-'nexion I have long promiſed myſelf with an 'unfortunate, deſerving family, and which 'my fortune enables me to raiſe from ob-'ſcurity. This unknown lady, may, per-

'haps,

'haps, have relations that can deal out
'the gifts of proſperity to her with a libe-
'ral hand, but the lovely miſs Stevens is
'baniſhed polite ſociety, for the enjoyment
'of which ſhe is no leſs qualified by na-
'ture than education, and compelled to
'find that refuge in a cottage, which a
'palace might, without indignity, afford
'her. No,' added he, 'I will be juſt and
'generous, and prefer the woman whoſe
'merits I am aſſured of, and whoſe brother
'I am indiſſolubly attached to, to a perſon
'who is come from I know not where, and
'would, perhaps, marry my title and for-
'tune, whilſt ſhe contemned my perſon.
'And yet, can ſuch deceit lie hid in ſuch a
'form? can her eyes ſparkle with in-
'nocent, quick ſenſibility, and indicate
'a pure, ingenuous mind, yet be deceit-
'ful? ſure it cannot be----but then, miſs
'Stevens----in ſhort, I am too much diſ-
'turbed to determine any thing, and will
'ſeek a diſſipation in the company of my
'friends.'

With

With this irreſolute reſolution he entered the parlour, at a juncture when Mr. Stevens and miſs Shelburne could have diſpenſed with his preſence. They, nevertheleſs, bore this interruption with becoming reſignation, as they found, with pleaſure, that the baronet was much more compoſed in mind. Lady Brightley being informed of her ſon's having left his chamber, ſhe joined the young party with a pleaſed and ſatisfactory aſpect.

Miſs Shelburne left lady Brightley and the friends together, for ſome time, as ſhe had poſtponed her intended morning viſit to her uncle, until the afternoon, and propoſed being back to tea. This compliment was ſtrained, and, in reality, a penhance to the young lady, but ſhe was determined to leave malice no foundation to build upon, nor have herſelf any thing to reproach her heart with.

Mrs. Alice uſhered her into the parlour and withdrew, in order to acquaint her maſter

maſter and miſtreſs that their niece was come, to wait upon them. Mrs. Slaughter's reſentment ran ſo high, that ſhe refuſed going down, declaring, ſhe would never conſent to countenance the diſobedient. As her power was abſolute, her humble huſband did not attempt to oppoſe her reſolution, but was ſneaking out of the room to receive his niece, and enquire after his ſiſter. It was impoſſible to accompliſh this deſign unperceived; Mrs. Slaughter, therefore, vehemently accuſed him of an intention to encourage his niece in her audacious behaviour, and proteſted, unleſs he would forbid her the houſe, ſhe would never more act as miſtreſs of it.

The poor curate endeavoured to expoſtulate with his unreaſonably enraged lady, which provoked her to ſuch a degree, that ſhe deſcended to call his family many opprobrious names, and ſaid, ſhe deteſted herſelf for her folly, in condeſcending to be ſo nearly connected with ſuch an upſtart, illiterate race, and wondered how ſhe came

to

to interfere with reſpect to his niece's, and her nephew's highway friend, as ſhe was now convinced that it was beſt that beggars ſhould inter-marry with beggars, to preſerve worthy blood from contamination. Miſs Shelburne was highly diverted at this ſpeech, which was uttered with ſo much vociferation, that ſhe diſtinctly heard every ſyllable of it, and ſecretly wiſhed ſhe might be denied admiſſion.

But Mrs. Slaughter's curioſity and deſire of tormenting, at length getting the better of her pride and diſpleaſure, ſhe conſented to her huſband's ſeeing his niece, provided ſhe might be commanded up ſtairs, as waiting upon her, ſhe ſaid, was ſhewing her too much grace. This propoſal was gladly complied with by the timid huſband, as a compromiſe for the indulgence ſhe permitted him, and the lovely miſs Shelburne did not diſpute this haughty injunction.

So

So ſoon as ſhe entered her aunt's apartment, 'Well madam,' ſaid that imperious lady, 'when is your romance to be concluded, and the run-away ſcene between Mr. Stevens and you performed? for I doubt not but that will be the end of your peregrinations, and an eternal diſgrace brought, by your forward indiſcretion, upon the Brightley family.' 'Madam,' ſaid miſs Shelburne, 'permit me to wave your ungenteel queſtions and concluſion, and enquire after your health and my uncle's, which in reality, is the ſole purport of my viſit.' 'It is falſe,' returned Mrs. Slaughter, 'it is by lady Brightley's inſtigation, you are come to ſpy into the manner of your uncle's life and mine, in order to furniſh them with a ſubject, and, therefore, I muſt tell you, the leſs I ſee of you the better.' 'Madam,' returned miſs Shelburne, 'it was a ſenſe of duty, though, perhaps, over-ſtrained, that brought me here, and the ſame ſentiments ſhall reſtrain me from repeating my viſits now I have an aunt's

'com-

'commands to deſiſt them.' 'Impertinent 'minx! however wiſe you may think your-'ſelf, I will venture to tell you, that when 'you think proper to exchange your preſent 'name for that ſtroling beggar Stevens, I 'ſhall inſiſt upon our relationſhip, or, more 'properly, alliance, being forgot; for I will 'never be ſtiled aunt by that ſhabby fel-'low.' 'Madam, I believe,' replied miſs Shelburne, 'I can as ſafely anſwer for that 'gentleman's compliance with your injunc-'tion, as my own, and, be aſſured, this 'is the laſt trouble you will receive from 'Lucy Shelburne.'

So ſaying, ſhe quitted this ſtrange woman's apartment, her uncle not daring to oppoſe her departure, and hurried back to the hall, to divert lady Brightley with the pretty ſcene ſhe had been engaged in. Her ladyſhip ſmiled at the account ſhe received of her ſiſter's miſtaken arrogancy, and ſaid, 'I wonder what reception I ſhall 'meet with, when I make my viſit? for, 'however extravagant this woman's pride

'tion; and likewiſe inſinuate, that, if ſhe 'could recommend you to any female that 'would accompany you to her houſe, it 'would greatly add to her protecting fa- 'vour. As your knowledge, madam, of 'this lady is but ſlight, and the affection 'of Mr. and Mrs. Finch for you moſt no- 'torious, you may be ſurprized that a 'friend, acquainted with theſe particulars, 'ſhould not adviſe you to apply to the lat- 'ter. But, madam, Mr. Finch has a ſon, 'who is bold enough to hope, that there 'may be ſome happy event in ſtore for 'him, that may encourage his public ſoli- 'citation of your heart and hand. The 'world, in its conjectures, not only takes 'in probable, but improbable circum- 'ſtances, and might conclude, that you 'ſought an aſylum at that gentleman's, to 'give you an opportunity of meeting the 'captain, and, likewiſe, that it was matter 'of deſign and pre-concertion between you. 'I, that know his heart, can aſſure you, 'he is as incapable of deſiring you to liſten 'to his addreſſes, clandeſtinely, as you 'can be of receiving them, and would as

'gladly

of either converſing or correſponding with her being cut off, by the indefatigable watchfulneſs, and incorruptible diſpoſition, of Mrs. Rebecca, who poſſeſſed the ſingle virtue of ſteady and uniform attachment to her maſter.

He was well acquainted with Mr. Macpherſon's family, and was informed by miſs of her brother's intended marriage with miſs Forteſcue. This intelligence affected him exceedingly, and induced him to have recourſe to ſtratagem, in order to diſcover whether this gentleman was the father's or the daughter's choice. 'It is but too pro-'bable,' ſaid he, 'that this lovely girl will 'be conſtrained to alienate her hand and 'heart. She has no aſſiſting friend, no 'interpoſing advocate; I will therefore aſ-'ſume the habit of a ſervant, and lurk in 'the neighbourhood, in order to help her at 'her greateſt need. My inferiority of for-'tune, though it forbids my taking advan-'tage of her youth and innocence, with re-'ſpect to engaging her to become my wife,

'does not, by any means, forbid my prov-
'ing a ſincere friend. If ſhe can approve
'the wretch her father hath choſen, I will
'not attempt to interfere, but ſhould ſhe
'happily be averſe, I will hazard my life
'to prevent the unnatural ſacrifice.'

Agreeable to this reſolution, the young gentleman obtained leave from his colonel (who was previouſly acquainted with his paſſion) to abſent himſelf from his corps for ſix months, on the bold deſign of introducing himſelf, by ſome means or other, at Mr. Forteſcue's. The captain took a lodging in a bye ſtreet, not far diſtant from the counſellor's, at a barber's, who had free egreſs and regreſs to his houſe, having ſhaved him gratis for ſeven ſucceſſive years, as a fee for having examined the deeds by which this poor fellow was intitled, after his mother's deceaſe, to a ſmall copyhold, in order to grant him a trifling mortgage upon it, which he nevertheleſs did not think proper to do. Mr. Finch's regimental was exchanged for a footman's frock,

frock, and the title of captain waved for a period, and plain Frank ſubſtituted in its ſtead, the ſuppoſed diſcarded ſervant of colonel Blunt. In this ſituation and diſguiſe, he continued a fortnight, without being able to obtain any greater ſatisfaction then viewing his miſtreſs's window twenty times a day.

We have already brought the reader acquainted with a ſtrange family that had dined at Mr. Forteſcue's, the ſucceeding day to miſs Caroline's arrival at home. A match being concluded between the ancient parties, the provident youth conſented to accept of the lovely girl, as a paſſe-par-tout to her fortune, being no leſs blind to her intrinſic merit, by his affectation, than he was by nature. The lover was, by Mr. Forteſcue's appointment, to wait upon miſs, to enjoy à tête à tête, one afternoon, when his preſence would be neceſſary at Weſtminſter-hall, by which means, the young couple would be perfectly free from interruption. Miſs Caroline was informed

every tranſaction at Brightley; and, leſt the amiable girl ſhould not have repreſented her caſe in terms ſufficient to excite lady Brightley's compaſſion, he enclofed her epiſtle in a frank, and added theſe few lines:

'MADAM,

'THE dear girl that now caſts herſelf upon your ladyſhip's protection, is 'threatened with no leſs an evil, than being 'compelled to marry both a weak and 'wicked wretch, and this merely to pro-'mote the private views of her avaricious 'father, and the ambition of the young 'man's aunt, a match between theſe cruel, 'deſigning perſons, being previouſly con-'cluded. Mr. and Mrs. Finch will make 'you ſenſible of the lady's merit, and, I 'dare believe, exert their utmoſt intereſt 'with your ladyſhip, to induce you to ſuc-'cour the diſtreſſed, amiable innocent.

'I am, madam, &c.'

Theſe letters were no ſooner read at Brightley, Mr. and Mrs. Finch being there, than

coat curiouſly embroidered, his ruffles point lace, his ſtiff neck (ill ſuited to ſuch ornament) adorned with a valuable ſolitaire, and his ſhoe and knee buckles, of brazil cryſtal; yet were theſe fine trappings ineffectual, to the rendering the wearer ought but a long legged, long ſided pale faced fop, over-run with affectation, and knowing only, where it would have been meritorious to have been ignorant. Mrs. Rebecca admired his dreſs, and really conſidered him as a very faſhionable, polite, fine gentleman, and uſhered him into the parlour with apparent marks of approbation.

Miſs Fonteſcue aroſe, on the entrance of the empty fop, and, recommending a ſeat to him, preſumed to replace herſelf without farther ceremony. To prevent a frothy converſation, ſhe immediately rang for the water, and plied her gallant with tea, in return for his high ſtrained compliments. This relief, however, failed her, for Mrs. Rebecca, firſt duly enquiring, if the gentleman had done, deprived her

of this little employment, and expoſed her to an inſipid perſecution.

Mr. Macpherſon, having choſen a moſt delectable ſituation, for the grateful indulgence of contemplating his own fine figure, conceiving he muſt of neceſſity entertain his miſtreſs, ſaid, through his cloſed teeth, 'I have been reflecting, during the ſervant's attendance, on the conſummate felicity, Mr. Forteſcue will confer upon me, in conſtituting me his ſon-in-law; a title, madam, that, without flattery, will render me vainer than would an imperial diadem.' 'Empty coxcomb,' thought the lovely maid, 'is it poſſible ſuch vanity can receive the leaſt addition!' 'What ſays my charmer,' reſumed he, 'will it not be an age until we are at liberty to caſt off our preſent reſtraint, and ſhew the world that we have a taſte for life, in its utmoſt elegance and refinement?' 'I ſir,' returned Miſs Forteſcue, 'am far from being impatient under my preſent circumſtances, as, [illegible] my infancy, I have been accuſtomed

'ed to a retired life, and have contracted an 'unconquerable averſion to, what is called, 'the polite world.' 'You amaze me, ma-'dam,' returned he, 'can a lady ſo young 'and beautiful as you are, affect ſolitude? 'I proteſt it is a moſt unparalleled conceit.' 'What you are pleaſed, ſir,' replied miſs Forteſcue, 'ſo genteelly to beſtow the epi-'thet of conceit upon, is, I can aſſure you, 'a natural propenſity. I am but ill quali-'fied to make a figure in the drawing-'room. My underſtanding uncultivated, 'my manners rude, and capacity limited; 'judge, ſir, what an unfit companion I 'ſhould be for your relations and friends, 'whoſe advantages of education, have re-'ceived no inconſiderable improvement 'from the converſation of well-bred ac-'quaintance.' 'You have, madam, a 'face,' ſaid the lover, 'which whoever 'beholds, muſt forget every other defici-'ency, admitting what you advance to be 'fact.' 'It is too great a hazard, ſir,' ob-ſerved the lady, 'unleſs, indeed, I could 'be ever beheld with your partial eyes.'

and bewailings of Mrs. Rebecca, for the untimely fate of her great grand mother's sugar-diſh, which had been preſerved, without crack or blemiſh, down to the fourth generation. The poor unfortunate boy, who was ſo unhappy as to have demoliſhed this valuable piece of furniture, trembled with exceſs of terror; for this maiden poſſeſſing moſt excellent lungs, and ſcolding being her peculiar talent, ſhe rattled him off with extreme ſeverity. She would not accept of any other reparation, or be appeaſed, unleſs Mr. Forteſcue would diſcharge the lad inſtantly, which, for peace ſake, was at length complied with.

Mr. Perkins, the barber, waiting upon his worthy maſter in the morning, to perform the accuſtomed operation, was informed of the fray, by Mrs. Rebecca, who was half inclined to relent, as the lad had made himſelf uncommonly uſeful. Mr. Perkins was too complaiſant not to lend an attentive ear to this tale of ſorrow, but as he valued himſelf upon not troubling his

head

head with what did not concern him, dispatched his buſineſs, with more than uſual dexterity, and returning home, related theſe particulars to the wife of his boſom.

The captain happening to be preſent, was well nigh diſcovering himſelf, by his rapture. He eagerly beſought his landlord to recommend him to the gentleman, for that he had ſo long lain out of place, he ſhould be glad to accept of any thing. 'I would not adviſe you, Mr. Frank,' ſaid the loquacious Mrs. Perkins, 'to engage 'yourſelf in that family, upon any account. 'Mr. Forteſcue (I am ſure we have reaſon 'to ſay it) is too cloſe fiſted to be honeſt, 'and we to this day, feel the weight of his 'covetouſneſs and cunning, but are obliged 'to hold a candle——you underſtand 'me,' added ſhe, jogging the captain's elbow. 'I believe,' returned the captain, 'I can be as conformable as moſt 'lads, and if you will favour me ſo far 'Mr. Perkins, as to recommend me, I will 'take care to behave in ſuch a manner as

'to

'to give satisfaction.' 'I wish, Mr. Frank,' resumed his landlady, 'I could persuade 'you to keep yourself out of this miser's 'clutches; take my word for it, if you do 'not, you will have reason to repent.' 'I 'must not be frightened at bugbears,' returned the captain, 'where my bread is 'depending; there is no place without its 'difficulties, and that is the best that has 'the fewest. I am, nevertheless, obliged 'to you for your kind advice, and if it 'should be impossible for me to stay, I 'should be glad of my old lodging again.' 'I will endeavour to serve you to-morrow 'morning,' said the barber, 'when I wait 'upon his honor again; but you must keep 'in the way, as he may have a desire to see 'you.'

Mr. Pineh received great satisfaction from this assurance, and, thinking he might with safety trust his landlord with his motives for engaging with so strange a man as Mr. Fortescue, he invited him to partake a chearful glass with him, over which he informed

formed him of every particular, and they ſettled together a plan of future operation. On the morrow, the barber performed his promiſe, and was commiſſioned to ſend the young man to paſs an examination with the counſellor directly.

On entering that houſe which contained the object of his beſt affections, the captain was greatly affected, and anſwered Mr. Forteſcue's ſeveral interrogatories with a diffidence and modeſty that determined his fate; for, notwithſtanding that gentleman's heart was uninformed by either of the above qualifications, he was no ſtranger to their value, and never failed to prefer, in a ſervant, the baſhful, to the forward. The captain agreed to perform the moſt ſervile offices of the houſe, on receiving a ſmall gratuity, a ſhabby livery, and his board; and as Mrs. Rebecca's demand for aſſiſtance was urgent, and the lad out of place, he was enjoined to come that very evening, when he was highly extolled, by his future fellow-ſervant, for his obliging-

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neſs in complying with her requeſts; which was, in reality, no more than acting agreeably to his own inclination.

When firſt he entered upon his new employment, he was very much at a loſs, and miſs Caroline's preſence did not a little contribute to increaſe his aukwardneſs; but practice, and a willing mind, as Mrs. Rebecca phraſed it, would render him, if not perfectly, decently handy.

He had now the pleaſure of feaſting his eyes with beholding this unſuſpicious fair-one, in accommodating her with the neceſſaries ſhe ſtood in need of, at dinner and ſupper; for which he was rewarded with thoſe benign ſmiles that ariſe from benevolence of heart. He had alſo the pleaſure to find, that his diligence to ingratiate himſelf with Mrs. Rebecca was ſucceſsful; and ſo ſatisfied was ſhe of him, that ſhe would dwell on his merit whole hours together.

Miſs Caroline, though free from every ſpecies of pride, was, nevertheleſs, by ſuggeſtions of prudence, ſuperior to the leveling herſelf to the company of a footboy; no ſmall inſtance of innate dignity, in one brought up ſo much about the kitchen as ſhe had been.

The captain had continued in this ſtate of humiliation only three days, before he was compelled to perform the mortifying taſk of waiting upon his rival, and was an eye witneſs of the approbation his maſter entertained for this over-lick'd cub (as he might juſtly be ſtiled) as his education enabled him to play the fool in a larger degree than ever honeſt nature intended he ſhould.

Several hours was this creature indulged, each ſucceeding day, with the company and converſation of this amiable maid, without his heart's being informed with one tender, grateful, or generous ſentiment. When he reflected upon his approaching change

change of condition, his thoughts were confined to self alone. The fortune he ſhould be intitled to, the ſhining equipage he ſhould poſſeſs, and the noble bets he would lay at Newmarket, flattered his love of pleaſure, and gave him the higheſt ſatisfaction. Miſs Caroline, all lovely as ſhe was, both in perſon and mind, was totally diſregarded by this empty being, unendued with a heart capable of a humane or rational impreſſion. Yet the youth did love (if a paſſion diſhonourable, depraved, and impure, can come under that denomination) and the object of his paſſion was the fair daughter of an innkeeper, with whom he had cohabited ever ſince he attained the age of ſeventeen. This young woman was miſtreſs of deep cunning, was mercenary, and inconſtant, and laviſhed the bounty of her unſuſpecting gallant upon a corporal in the guards, with whom ſhe privately intrigued.

Jenny Dawkins, for that was the name of Mr. Macpherſon's admired lady, was appriſed of her keeper's intended nuptials, who,

who, on revealing his intentions to her, had generouſly promiſed, that ſhe ſhould have a handſome ſettlement out of miſs Forteſcue's fortune. It may ſeem ſtrange, that our deep reſearching counſellor ſhould make ſo unworthy a choice for his daughter; but the reader's amazement will ceaſe, when he is informed, that he had the ſeveral great ends in view of advancement in his profeſſion, retaining the management of his daughter's fortune, as well as her huſband's, which was very conſiderable, and entering himſelf, once more, the matrimonial trammels.

His ſon elect was nephew to a widow lady, immenſely rich, and particularly agreeable. Mr. Forteſcue's profeſſion had introduced him to her acquaintance, and ſhe ſoon became attached to his perſon, and agreeable behaviour: but, being far from the novice he before had to deal with, ſhe was qualified, both in capacity and ſpirit, to puniſh all his tranſgreſſions. On her firſt diſcovering her growing inclination for

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the counſellor, ſhe determined to preſerve it within due ſubordination to her prudence and artifice, and only ſurrender her perſon on diſcrete and advantageous terms.

Mr. Forteſcue was really delighted with her converſation, and pleaſed with her perſon, and, as he had ever eaſy acceſs, and apparently poſſeſſed a ſhare in Mrs. Swinton's approbation, he ventured, in one of the happy interviews, to declare himſelf without reſerve. The lady affected great aſtoniſhment at what ſhe heard, and proteſted, ſhe little expected to have made ſo extraordinary a conqueſt. Upon the lawyer's repeatedly aſſuring her, that his heart was irreparably gone, ſhe condeſcended to treat with him, concerning ſome neceſſary preliminaries to ſo great an event.

'I will, Mr. Forteſcue,' ſaid ſhe, 'wave 'the uſual parade on theſe occaſions, as 'you and I have ſeen too much of the 'world to be children; and, therefore, I 'will ingenuouſly communicate the con-

'ceſſions

'ceſſions I ſhall require on your part; after 'which, you ſhall be at liberty to make 'your objections and propoſals.' The lawyer aſſenting, the good lady proceeded. 'I 'have a nephew, Mr. Forteſcue, whom I 'have ever conſidered as my own child, 'and you have one daughter; their for-'tunes are pretty equal, their ages perfectly 'ſuitable. Jemmy will be my undoubted 'heir, I, therefore, think it will be for our 'common intereſt, previous to our union, 'to unite them. It is true, my nephew 'has not all that brightneſs of underſtand-'ing that might be wiſhed, but, I give 'you my word, he is quite the fine gentle-'man. Your daughter, I am informed, 'has ſeen very little of life; ſhe will be, 'undoubtedly, taken with him, and I am 'confident the young man will comply 'with any propoſition to oblige me. It 'would, certainly, be prudent for you to 'reſerve the management of the young 'lady's fortune, which, in conjunction with 'the thouſands I poſſeſs, and your own 'private purſe, will enable you to purchaſe

'a peer-

'a peerage, the title to devolve, on your 'deceaſe, to our children.'

Mr. Forteſcue's ears had never been ſo agreeably tickled in his whole life. He immediately ſwallowed the bait, engaged for his daughter's compliance, and was introduced, to Mrs. Swinton's family, in the character of her intended huſband; when their intentions, with reſpect to Jemmy and miſs Caroline, were imparted, to the general ſatisfaction of all the relations.

For this purpoſe was the young lady hurried from her country friends, and as her conſent was by no means judged neceſſary, it was never once aſked; nor had ſhe longer time alotted her, to receive her brilliant ſpark, upon the footing of a lover, than the drawing of the ſettlement would require.

All theſe particulars Mr. Finch learned from the lacquey of his favoured competitor, whoſe natural communicative propenſity

fety was heightened by a chearful glaſs, adminiſtered by the captain for that very purpoſe.

The lover, at the ſame time alarmed at the threatening diſpoſal of his miſtreſs, conceived the utmoſt deteſtation for Mr. Forteſcue's proceedings. To ſacrifice ſuch a daughter to avarice and ambition, unmindful of her repoſe, or the temper and character of the wretch into whoſe power ſhe was to be delivered, was a reflection of horror to him. 'Shall I, then,' ſaid he, 'be 'acceſſory to ſuch inhumanity and injuſ'tice? Shall I be reſtrained, by a too nice 'ſenſe of honour, and conſideration of fi'lial duty, from diſcovering myſelf to this 'worthy girl, and prevailing upon her to 'permit me to ſave her from deſtruction? 'Ought not baſe actions to be controverted 'by honeſt acts? And, when a parent for'gets, or diſcards his nature, ſhall not a 'child, from a principle of ſelf-preſerva'tion and defence, be allowed, without 'cenſure, to ſeek an hoſpitable aſylum?

'Yes,

'Yes, decorum muſt yield to neceſſity, nor 'ſhall this dear creature become a victim to 'rapacious pride and cruelty, to avoid the 'imputation of the run-away and diſobedi-'It is incumbent upon us, for example ſake, 'not only to act with, but preſerve the ap-'pearance of, propriety. But, ſurely, no 'one can advance ſo palpable a falſhood, 'as, that quitting the houſe of a parent, 'however clandeſtinely, can be culpable, 'when it is merely to avoid a moſt wilful 'and ſolemn perjury. Can it be conſiſtent 'with either right reaſon or religion, that, 'to preſerve one's duty inviolate, we ſhould 'commit a breach of many duties, equally 'ſtriking and binding, and engage in a 'life of perpetual ſin? for a marriage, 'where the will is conſtrained, is no other 'than a legal proſtitution. O that I were 'capable of forming a ſcheme, that could 'at once ſave my Caroline's delicacy from 'the ſhock of elopement, and preſerve her 'from the impending calamity! but it can-'not be. Yet, as her reputation is dearer 'to me than my own happineſs, I will de-

'liver

'liver her with all the honour her ſituation 'will admit of, nor once requeſt her to be'ſtow her hand upon me, until the ſanction 'of her friends approbation, if not her fa'ther's conſent, may encourage and autho'rize her to confer that bleſſing upon me.'

Mrs. Rebecca, being a woman of uncommon penetration, ſoon diſcovered that Mr. Frank was in love, and, as her charms had once inſpired a ſimple ſwain with that tender paſſion, ſhe thought it far from impoſſible it ſhould be the preſent caſe, eſpecially as ſhe was poſitive ſhe had obſerved the young man to view her perſon attentively, and ever found him uncommonly aſſiduous to obey her commands. This ſuppoſed conqueſt ſhe communicated to her young miſtreſs, who was obliged to liſten, in appearance, to every dull tale this creature choſe to entertain her with. She gave herſelf very little trouble about the loves of theſe domeſtics, as her heart and attention were engroſſed by her own affairs

'How unhappy,' said she, 'is my fitua-
'tion, without mother or friend to advise
'or converse with! My father evidently
'considers me as his property, and makes
'a less scrupulous assignment of me than
'he would of any other possession. My
'lover's approbation and esteem is ab-
'sorbed by himself alone; nor have I any
'other prospect, were this intended wed-
'ding to take place, than being forsaken,
'despised, and cruelly treated. Ah, my
'dear Mrs. Finch, what a husband is
'your's! His affection increased by a suc-
'cession of years, your happiness his own,
'and your smiles the delight of his eyes!
'Charming woman, as you are, this would
'not have been your fate, had your father,
'giddy with ambition, only sought the ag-
'grandization of his family. What, then,
'have I to expect? My ideas, unenlarged
'by education; my inexperience, my youth,
'subjecting me to error and caprice; no
'love to cover the glaring faults of the hus-
'band allotted for me; nay, so far from it,
'that aversion would quicken my sight,

'and

'and magnify every trifle to an enor-
'mous ſize: what, then, can be the conſe-
'quence, but miſery unſpeakable! My
'too faithful memory is continually ſug-
'geſting thoſe days I ſpent in converſe
'with the young captain; his engaging
'looks, his ſoothing voice and pleaſing
'language, are ever preſent to my remem-
'brance, and aggravate the diſguſtful va-
'nity, affectation, and bold addreſs of my
'unfeeling fop. Can he ſuppoſe that a ra-
'tional, reflecting being, can be attached
'to ſuch an empty flutterer? But, alas, he
'knows not himſelf nor me, or he would
'ceaſe, from a principle of pride or huma-
'nity, to perſecute me. Yet why ſhould
'I think of the amiable captain? Per-
'haps, notwithſtanding the grateful aſſu-
'rances he gave me, of ever eſteeming
'me, I may be forgotten by him. Soli-
'tude contributes to increaſe a particular
'inclination, whilſt liberty, and a diverſity
'of objects, have the oppoſite effect. O
'fatal Gloceſterſhire journey! How great
'a loſer am I returned? deprived, as I am,

he had taken, was in its firſt, and conſequently, ſtrongeſt operations. Alarmed and terrified as he was, by the uncommon and dreadful wailings of his favourite, he had not the reſolution to quit his chamber, but rang his bell with the utmoſt violence, in order to obtain a ſafe, and ſpeedy information.

Rebecca, overcome with her fright, ſuffered her maſter to continue ſome time in horror and ſuſpence, but on recovering her preſence of mind, ſhe obeyed his ſummons with unabated ſqualling, until ſhe reached his room door; when the counſellor cried out, 'What is the matter Re-'becca? What can be the meaning of all 'this confuſion?' 'O, ſir,' replied the frighted virgin, 'if you will be ſo kind 'as to open the door, I will, on my knees, 'reveal the whole fact.' 'Good Heavens!' ſaid Mr. Forteſcue, 'what fact have you 'committed? I believe, woman, you have 'loſt your ſenſes'. 'O, ſir,' returned ſhe, 'I wiſh it were no worſe, but miſs Caro-'line'------ At the mention of that name,

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our pleader became a new man, the fumes of wine were banished, by his stronger fear. 'Good Rebecca, tell me,' said he, flying to the door, and opening it, 'tell 'me what has happened to Caroline!' 'Ah, sir,' said Rebecca, 'I beseech you 'to pardon me, and believe me innocent, 'but miss Caroline is gone!' 'Out of my 'way, woman,' said the enraged counsellor (at the same time pushing her down) 'gone! where? when? how? oh, the 'wicked, sly, designing hussy! but she is 'what her mother was before her! she had 'a blessed example!'

How ungenerous this reflection was I leave the judgment of to my readers; but such is the ingratitude of man, that he ever condemns female impropriety, notwithstanding it may be merely the result of affection for him, or compliance with his repeated solicitations.

Rebecca got up as well as she was able, having received no small hurt by her fall,

and followed her master's footsteps. 'I 'suppose,' said Mr. Fortescue, 'she is 'gone off with that vile fellow, Frank, and 'I shall have a scandalous brat to main-'tain; but I will hang the dog, that he 'may depend on.' The captain was prepared for a visit, by Mrs. Rebecca's outcry, doubting not but their suspicions would fall upon him; but when the counsellor, attended by his faithful house-keeper, entered the garret, and found Frank in a counterfeit sleep, his astonishment was infinitely increased. 'This is, indeed, a master 'stroke,' said he, 'but I suppose, fellow, 'you have been the go-between, the let-'ter-carrier, and can inform me what 'wretch has been weak enough to bring 'himself to the gallows, for intriguing 'with my daughter?' The captain affected great surprise, and protested, he was innocent of the charge, and did not know of any gentleman's being gone off with miss Caroline, nor that any one intended it. 'Deceive me at your peril, rascal,' said Mr. Fortescue, 'your confession may

'avail

f avail you, but be aſſured, I will puniſh 'you with the ſevereſt rigour, unleſs you 'diſcover all you know.' 'Lord, ſir,' ſaid the captain, 'how ſhould you ſuppoſe 'miſs Caroline would accept my poor 'aſſiſtance? why Mrs. Rebecca knows I 'have never been concerned in any in-'triguing, nor have I any head for it. I 'am ſure if you knew all, ſir, you would 'not ſuſpect me.' 'I'll ſearch this affair 'to the bottom,' ſaid the enraged lawyer, darting a furious look, 'and if you have 'been any way aſſiſting, it had been better 'for you never to have been born.' He then ruſhed out of the garret, attended by the trembling Rebecca.

His ambitious views thus counterwork-ed, was a ſevere ſtroke to him; and though he returned to his bed, he found no repoſe. There was not the leaſt clue by which to trace the run-away; and ſhould a marriage be effected between his daughter and an unworthy wretch, the re-venge he ſhould be able to take afterwards,

would be, by no means, adequate to the deſire of his heart, as three years would give her an indiſputable claim to her fortune. In this ſtate of perplexity, he continued all that night, and was denied to every one the next day; when Frank was ſent one way, and Rebecca another, to enquire at the inns, in order to gain ſome intelligence concerning her. This parent was very unwilling his daughter's elopement ſhould tranſpire, until he had concerted ſome certain means, leſt it ſhould prevent his match with Mrs. Swinton taking place. He began, upon reflection, to flatter himſelf, that if his daughter had made an imprudent choice, and he could fright her into advantageous conceſſions, to obtain his forgiveneſs, he might be ſtill able to carry that deſired point. He indeed, regretted, that, in loſing Mr. Macpherſon, he ſhould loſe his fortune; but he wiſely imagined, that Mrs. Swinton would, with leſs ſcruple, join in defrauding a ſtranger, than her own nephew. A very poor compliment to his proceedings, who was ſtudying the deſtruction of

of a child. He was reduced to the neceſſity, the ſecond day of miſs Caroline's abſence, of inventing twenty excuſes to diſengage himſelf from viſiting Mrs. Swinton, and on the third day, lady Brightley's epiſtle renewed all his grievance. To find his daughter withdrawn from his protection, and in ſuch ſafe and honourable hands, no huſband in the caſe, no indiſcretion to charge her with, was a mortifying circumſtance he little expected. However, deceit being a prompt principle in his heart, it ſuggeſted to him, that, by appearing ſatisfied with his daughter's conduct, and yielding, as it were, to the perſuaſions of her friends, he might once more allure her into his power, and then deal with her as he thought proper. In obedience to this prudent monitor, he wrote as follows.

'MADAM,

'I Profeſs myſelf infinitely obliged to 'you, both for your kind reception of, 'and friendly expoſtulations, with reſpect

'to my late treatment of my perverse 'girl. I believe I did not give the matter 'due conſideration, nor can I, even as a 'father, experience the tender delicacies, 'and nice diſtinctions, by which your lady-'ſhip's maternal heart is informed. Men 'have not thoſe refinements in their rough-'er natures; but I, nevertheleſs, have ſo 'much of the father, as to love my girl, 'to ſeek her felicity, and never more offer 'violence to her inclination. I give up my 'views to your ſolicitations, and if you, 'madam, will take upon you to ſay I can, 'I am willing to, receive a dutiful child 'from your hands; dutiful in every other 'reſpect, but the matrimonial. The ſooner 'ſhe returns, the more agreeable.

'I am, madam, &c.

Having committed this letter to the poſt, our counſellor made a viſit to his intended lady, and, as he could no longer conceal it, he made her acquainted with his daughter's elopement. Mrs. Swinton

was

was greatly mortified, and lent, after that intelligence, an unwilling ear to Mr. Bonefcue's love profeſſions. 'I am ſorry, 'ſir,' ſaid ſhe, 'that our connection muſt 'be interrupted, but as the only terms, on 'which I could have received you, ſeem 'impracticable, you muſt excuſe me, if 'I deſire you to diſmiſs your viſits.'

The counſellor was thunderſtruck at this ſpeech, but being a man of the moſt prudent compoſure, where his intereſt was concerned, he gravely intreated the lady to poſtpone the ſentence of baniſhment, until ſhe ſaw what could be done with his daughter, on her return. 'I may expect every thing,' ſaid he, 'from 'her docility of temper, but it will be 'dangerous to drive her to extremities, as 'ſhe can command the management of 'her whole fortune, the day ſhe is of 'age. Had ſhe made an improper choice, 'in all probability, I ſhould have reaped 'more advantage, than if ſhe was even 'given to your nephew. But we ſhall

'be

'be better able to judge in ſome ſhort 'time; only, madam, in the interim, de-'prive me not of the happineſs of ſeeing 'you.' Mrs. Swinton's characteriſtic being that of good nature, ſhe yielded to the counſellor's importunity, and reſtored his ſatisfaction of heart, by a promiſe of receiving his future viſits.

END OF BOOK IV.

BOOK

BOOK V.

MISS Forteſcue and miſs Stevens ſoon contracted a friendſhip, from ſimilarity of diſpoſition, and equality of age. The former ſighed for the captain, the latter for the baronet; but were reſtrained from communicating the ſoft inclination of their hearts, even to each other, from a principle of delicacy inſeparable to the mind of the retired, modeſt virgin.

Brightley was, by no means, the agreeable place miſs Caroline had known it; in her imagination, the *woods were all lonely, the melody gone*; roſes became leſs fair, leſs ſweet, than when bluſhing beneath the eye, and gathered by the valued hand, of

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the youthful captain. The road from the village to Mr. Johnſon's farm was her favourite walk, as it concurred to revive many pleaſing recollections of that tender declaration Mr. Finch had there entertained her with, of his affection for her. She ſecretly wiſhed his return during her continuance in the country, but deſpaired of enjoying ſo great a happineſs. Her fair friend's thoughts were wholly engroſſed by the handſome baronet; his underſtanding and politeneſs equally engaged her approbation; his behaviour to his mother, his ſtrong and generous attachment to her brother, were irreſiſtible charms, and the whole world appeared as nothing in her ſight, in competition with that amiable youth.

She had now been two months at Brightley, during which time the baronet continued ſullen, and almoſt inacceſſible to his friend, who was alarmed and afflicted at the unexpected change. 'How little de-'pendance,' he would ſay to miſs Shelburne,

burne, 'ought we to have upon the human 'heart! To-day it approves, and overflows 'with the grateful profeſſions of friendſhip 'and affection; to-morrow it is diſguſted, 'it knows not why, becomes cold, reſerved, 'and diſingenuous, and, by preventing an 'eclairciſſement with its wonted favourite, 'obſtructs every means of being unde-'ceived, diſabuſed, and reconciled. Who 'would have imagined that I, who ſeemed 'ſo entirely poſſeſſed of ſir William Bright-'ley's eſteem, ſhould fall into diſgrace, 'unconſcious of having offended, and re-'main uninformed of my offence? But I 'will perſevere in a patient ſubmiſſion to 'this ſtrange, newly aſſumed humour, and 'convince him, that integrity of heart is a 'never-failing ſupport.'

'Sir William,' returned miſs Shelburne, 'is, in this inſtance, an undeniable evi-'dence, that even the utmoſt good ſenſe is 'fallible, and that error and perfection is 'ſo interwoven in our nature, as to be in-'ſeparable, and with ourſelves, indiſtin-'guiſhable.

'guiſhable. I dare believe this young gentle-
'man fancies himſelf perfectly right in his
'conduct, and has ſome imaginary good
'reaſon for this ſhyneſs and reſentment,
'which time will, doubtleſs, unravel.'

The baronet enjoyed as little tranquility as his friend, from the alteration in his diſpoſition. He perceived, he deſpiſed the inconſiſtence he was guilty of, in retaining an unabated friendſhip for Mr. Stevens, yet excluding him from a knowledge of his heart, ſhunning his company, and diſliking his converſation. He would enter the parlor reſolved to atone for his paſt unkindneſs, by proofs of repentance, and re-attachment; but found himſelf incapable of acting ſuch a part as he himſelf could approve, and would quit the room abruptly, and make freſh reſolutions, which he was equally unable to adhere to. 'Surely,' he would ſay, 'I am a ſlave to falſe honor; I
'am under no engagement to prefer miſs
'Stevens; why do I, then, create theſe
'difficulties, and conſtrain myſelf, with re-
'ſpect

'ſpect to acknowledging I am at laſt be-
'come a lover? But I know not who the
'lady is, whence ſhe comes, or what con-
'nexions ſhe has; and, perhaps, the firſt
'fruit of my affectionate declaration would
'be the afflicting diſcovery, that ſhe is deſ-
'tined for young Finch, and that they are
'ſpeedily to be united by a ſacred rite,
'which may ſtrengthen, but cannot in-
'creaſe, their long, long engaged eſteem.
'I cannot bear this torturing ſuſpence.
'Had I but the courage, the juſtice, to
'give Stevens a ſhare in my diſtreſs, my
'doubts would ſoon be diſpelled: he would
'inform himſelf, and me, of every particu-
'lar I could wiſh to know, and ſooth my
'ſoul to peace, by his unanſwerable reaſon-
'ing, and gentle perſuaſions. I will in-
'ſtantly ſeek him, obtain his pardon for
'the late effects of my weakneſs and folly,
'and ſolicit his friendly aſſiſtance, to re-
'ſtore me to my wonted chearfulneſs, and
'heart-felt ſatisfaction. This method, I
'know, by experience, I am unable to pur-
'ſue:—but, if I cannot ſpeak, I can

'write—

'write---Happy ſuggeſtion! Yes, *I* can, 'by letter, reveal my every thought---I 'will catch, as it were, this inclination, 'nor give myſelf, by reflection, an increaſe 'of mortification.' At this inſtant, having the neceſſary materials about him, he thus diſcharged his mind of its ſentiments, attachments, doubts, waverings, and every ſpecies of love-born perplexity; which he had no ſooner compleated, than he depoſited it under the covering of his friend's bed:

'DEAR FRANK,

'IS it poſſible that you can be a ſtranger 'to the agitations of your friend's 'heart? by penetration alone, I ſhould 'imagine, you would detect me; but even 'ſympathy is dull, nor informs you, that 'your friend is, at laſt, caught in ſimilar 'toils, by which you have been long en-'tangled. O, Stevens, I conjure you to 'recollect the part I took in your ſuffer-'ings, how I always lent a willing ear to 'your complaints, acquired every informa-

'tion

'tion I thought could be ſerviceable to 'you, and ſincerely wiſhed you happily 'united to the object of your beſt affec-'tions. Had I been capable, with what 'pleaſure would I have obſtructed every 'impediment, and opened a ſucceſsful path 'to the attainment of your wiſhes! Some 'difficulties I did obviate, and it is now, 'indirectly, by any means, that you en-'joy the continued felicity of entertaining 'the woman you love. I mention not theſe 'particulars as taxes upon your gratitude, 'but in order to induce you to pity, and 'ſpare me.

'You remember how long I entertained 'a deſire to ſee your ſiſter, how ſtrongly I 'was prepoſſeſſed in her favour, and what 'ſatisfaction I promiſed myſelf, in calling 'you brother; but theſe days are now no 'more! a ſtranger has made that conqueſt 'I would have reſerved for her, and ſup-'planted her image in my heart. I no 'longer ſigh from an imaginary cauſe, not-'withſtanding all is uncertain around me! 'I fear

'I fear young Finch has a prior claim to
'the object of my admiration; nor am I ſo
'deſpicable, as to even wiſh to purchaſe
'my happineſs at the expence of his. Far
'gone, as I feel I am, I would not receive
'her lovely hand but in conjunction with
'her heart, nor conſtitute an angel lady
'Brightley, unleſs love, alone, could in-
'duce her acceptance of me. I have no-
'thing to fear from you; you ſee with
'other eyes than mine. I conjure you,
'then, by our paſt friendſhip, to become
'my advocate; tell her how greatly I
'eſteem her, ſolicit her tender approbation
'for me; but be ſure, above all things, to
'make yourſelf acquainted with the true
'ſtate of her inclinations. If you can, upon
'enquiry, and converſing with her, give
'me the happy aſſurance, that her heart is
'free from every impreſſion, you will, in-
'deed, ſpeak my felicity. My youth ſub-
'jects me to this violence of paſſion; you
'know I am not a ſenſualiſt; her mind, as
'well as perſon, has engaged me, and, I
'fear, too much of my peace is dependant

'upon

upon her favour. But let me not forget my beſt of mothers, ſhe has a right to be conſulted, who has ever conſulted my eaſe. The eye that has watched me from my earlieſt exiſtence, with the moſt tender anxiety, ſhall never ſhed a tear at my indiſcrete choice. She ſhall have a daughter, when I have a wife; nor would I ſacrifice her repoſe to make myſelf an emperor. The heart that has ever beat with maternal tenderneſs, ſhall never be wounded by its darling object.

'Can you, Stevens, can you gueſs by whom this change in my diſpoſition is wrought? or is it neceſſary for me to mention Mr. Finch's fair viſitor?' I give up my connexion with your family with regret; I wiſh your amiable ſiſter a more valuable and ſteady lover, and ſhall ſtill rejoice in, and endeavour to ſtrike out the means of, her and your good mother's felicity. Suffer not your regard for me to be diminiſhed, by my involuntary falling off in one particular, but remem-

'ber

'her what you yourſelf have endured on
'the amiable miſs Shelburne's account.
'You cannot jeſt at woes yourſelf have felt:
'putting your natural generoſity of heart
'out of the queſtion. Intereſt yourſelf,
'therefore, in the cauſe of your once loved
'friend; a cauſe, on the ſucceſs of which
'is hinged his peace, his happineſs, and
'life.

'Adieu, my worthy Stevens.'

By ſome unlucky chance the letter ſlipped under the bolſter, and was unperceived by Mr. Stevens. The family at the hall dined the next day, by engagement, at Mr. Finch's, and, in the afternoon, repaired into the garden. Sir William had avoided meeting his friend's eyes all the day, and reſolved not to declare his paſſion for the young lady, until he had received an anſwer to his letter.

The tea and coffee were ordered to be conveyed to a little ſummer-houſe, ſituated on a mount; from whence, having ſpent

ſome

hours in friendly chat, they all deſcended, and, as the gardens were large, each took the route moſt agreeable to their fancy. The fair friends, and the baronet, ſeparated themſelves from the wiſer multitude; but ſoon, miſs Forteſcue, inſtructed by love alone, diſcovered the ſecret inclinations of the youthful pair, and, very good naturedly, dropped them, in a winding alley, to give them an opportunity of converſing without a witneſs, and herſelf the liberty of indulging ſome particular reflections. The baronet, and miſs Stevens, were ſo deeply engaged in contemplating the beauties of nature, that they were got at ſome diſtance from the ſeat on which miſs Forteſcue had repoſed herſelf, before they were ſenſible they had loſt her company. Sir William firſt made the pleaſing, unexpected diſcovery, when miſs Stevens immediately propoſed returning to ſeek for her; but the baronet eaſily perſuaded the credulous maid, that ſhe had given them the ſlip in order to divert herſelf with alarming them, and had, doubtleſs, joined the other

party. 'If, madam,' continued this young gentleman, 'you dare truſt yourſelf under 'my conduct, we ſhall rejoin them at the 'termination of this little labyrinth, in which 'I cannot miſlead you, if I was ſo diſpoſed.' 'I, ſir,' returned miſs Stevens, 'am ſo far 'from being ſuſpicious, that I have great 'confidence in your protection.' 'If you 'knew my heart, madam,' replied the baronet, with ſome confuſion, 'you would 'not doubt my being well affected towards 'you. But who can behold ſo charming 'an object without admiration?'

The little maze, in which our lovers were got together, was compoſed of ſuch ſhort windings, that it was poſſible for any perſon to be at a convenient diſtance for overhearing a converſation, without being diſcovered. Mr. Stevens and miſs Shelburne had, undeſignedly, ſtruck into this intricate track, juſt as the baronet uttered the words above inſerted, which they diſtinctly heard. 'The plot begins to thicken,' whiſpered miſs Shelburne, ſmiling; 'I have long ſuſpect-

'ed

'ed this; if we are but dexterous we ſhall 'hear it unfolded.'

'I, madam,' reſumed ſir William, 'was 'free from a variety of ſenſations I now 'experience, until I had the pleaſure of 'beholding you. It was not merely a face 'that could attract me; but my heart has 'proved unable to reſiſt the united charms 'of perſon and mind.'

Miſs Stevens felt a pleaſing ſenſibility at the baronet's profeſſion; but, notwithſtanding ſhe wiſhed him to declare himſelf more largely, ſhe had not the courage to promote the ſubject. Sir William was ſilent, ſhe was diſtreſſed, and enquired, with a view to conceal her diſorder, how far the labyrinth extended?

'It is infinitely too limited,' returned the lover, 'to permit me to deſcribe the 'tender inclination you have inſpired me 'with. This is a caſual and unexpected 'opportunity, and, madam, let me intreat

'you to render it a happy one, by conde-
'ſcending to reſolve the ſingle queſtion,
'whether you are engaged, or not, in your
'affections?' 'My life, ſir William,' re-
plied miſs Stevens '(excluſive of my jour-
'ney to Brightley) has hitherto been ſuch
'as has ſecluded me from all ſociety with
'men of breeding and merit; conſequent-
'ly, whatever natural ſuſceptibility I may
'be endued with, has been unawakened.
'But you, ſir, have not been ſo confined
'in your travels; not only the fine faces
'of England, but even thoſe of France
'and Italy have been familiar to your eyes.
'Excuſe me, then, if I impute the high
'compliment you have paid me, to polite-
'neſs alone.' 'I will,' ſaid the baronet,
'to remove every doubt of my ſincerity,
'with your permiſſion, lay my whole heart
'open to you.

'Some few years ago, I was as much
'unacquainted with your ſex, as you can
'poſſibly be with mine. Brightley, the
'place of my nativity, had retained my
'unwil-

'unwilling reſidence, from my birth until
'that period, and denied me the ſatisfac-
'tion I have ſince enjoyed. I, indeed, con-
'ceived an imaginary attachment to the
'the ſiſter of my friend Stevens, from the
'deſcription I received of her; that im-
'preſſion preſerved my heart from every
'foreign attack, and I believed myſelf
'fixed in the reſolution of viſiting that
'young lady, and ſoliciting her acceptance
'of my heart: but miſs Stevens's image
'is perfectly eraſed from my breaſt, ſince
'I became acquainted with you; I no
'longer remember her acknowledged me-
'rit, and reſemblance to my handſome
'friend, but find, in your corporeal, and
'mental accompliſhment, all that is fair,
'lovely, and valuable.'

Miſs Stevens was thunderſtruck by this laſt ſpeech, and was about to diſcover her name to the baronet; when her brother, ſuſpecting her deſign, emerged, with miſs Shelburne, from their concealment, and no leſs ſurprized, than mortified, the lovers

Miſs Shelburne rallied them with great goodnature and politeneſs, on their having ſtrolled from the company, into ſuch a retired walk; and it was ſome time before the baronet could ſo far recover himſelf, as to return the compliment. They then returned, by joint conſent, by the way ſir William and miſs Stevens had came, in order to find miſs Forteſcue, who had not quitted her rural ſeat during their abſence, and excuſed herſelf for having played them ſuch a ſlippery trick, by complaining of a ſlight head-ach. Mr. Stevens enjoyed the higheſt ſatisfaction from the diſcovery he had made, which he had not an opportunity of informing lady Brightley of that night. At ſupper they were very gay, Mr. Finch exerting his utmoſt good-humour for the entertainment of his friends, who did not take their leave until a late hour, and, on their arrival at the hall, they inſtantly retired to their reſpective apartments.

Mr.

Mr. Stevens found the baronet's letter laid upon his table by the houſe-maid, who mentioned the place, with ſurpriſe, where ſhe had found it. Mr. Stevens no ſooner peruſed the contents, than he conceived the manner of the accident, and impatiently expected the morning. His heart was agitated by a variety of paſſions, occaſioned from the various deſcriptions in the epiſtle; ſurpriſe was ſucceeded by mortification, mortification by compaſſion, compaſſion by reſentment, reſentment by ſatisfaction, &c. &c. But the certainty of his friend's affection for his ſiſter, made amends for every thing. 'I ſhall, at laſt,' ſaid he, 'have a 'brother in my beloved friend, my ſiſter a 'generous huſband, and my mother, a 'noble, meritorious ſon.' Miſs Shelburne participated, by ſympathy, in Mr. Stevens's felicity, and paſſed the night in pleaſing contemplations. Lady Brightley, ignorant of all that had happened, enjoyed her accuſtomed ſerenity, without addition or allay. Sir William eagerly ſought for an anſwer from his friend, at leaſt to approve

his flame, if not encourage it, and was greatly chagrined at his diſappointment. He ſlept little, but conſoled himſelf with the ſoothing hope of not being diſagreeable to his admired fair-one. 'She evidently 'ſeemed,' ſaid he, 'rather to doubt the 'ſincerity of my affection for her, than of- 'fended at the declaration of it. The in- 'terruption of Stevens and miſs Shelburne 'was very unſeaſonable.'

Miſs Forteſcue ſpent ſome ſhort time in lamenting the unhappy perverſeneſs of her fate, compelled, as ſhe was, to fly her fa- ther's houſe, to avoid the man ſhe hated, and misfortune at not meeting with the man ſhe loved; reflections which coſt her ſeveral ſighs, and by no means contributed to her repoſe. Miſs Stevens was puzzled, to the laſt degree, by reflecting upon the baronet's myſterious converſation. To love her, as the ſiſter of his friend, and, when imagining her a ſtranger, to contract ſuch regard for her, delighted, perplexed, ſed, and mortified her. She conceived

the

the baronet was deſtined for miſs Forteſcue, which rather occaſioned a coldneſs towards that lovely girl in her heart; and ſhe perſuaded herſelf, ſhe would not encourage her own growing inclination for him, until that doubt was removed. She judged, from his generoſity to her brother, that he was incapable of being biaſſed by pecuniary conſiderations; but, when her imagination enumerated the many merits miſs Forteſcue poſſeſſed, ſhe ſaw but little reaſon to hope, that the youthful baronet ſhould behold her with indifference. Sleep, however, at length, ſubdued all her ſuſpicions and jealouſy, by his all-healing hand, and, by diſplaying a ſoft, flattering ſcene, fancy compenſated all her ſufferings.

In the morning, Mr. Stevens aroſe earlier than his uſual cuſtom, in order to obtain an audience from lady Brightley, without her ſon's knowledge. Miſs Stevens was with her ladyſhip when he was admitted into her dreſſing-room; and he put ſir William's letter into her hand, without

[illegible] and likewise insinuate, that, if she [illegible] recommend you to any female that [illegible] accompany you to her house, it [illegible] greatly add to her protecting fa- [illegible] As your knowledge, madam, of [illegible] is but slight, and the affection [illegible] Mr. and Mrs. Finch for you most no- [illegible] you may be surprized that a [illegible] acquainted with these particulars, [illegible] you to apply to the lat- [illegible] madam, Mr. Finch has a son, [illegible] enough to hope, that there [illegible] happy event in store for [illegible] encourage his public soli- [illegible] heart and hand. The [illegible] not only takes [illegible] but improbable circum- [illegible] conclude, that you [illegible] gentleman's, to [illegible] of meeting the [illegible] that it was matter [illegible] between you. [illegible] can assure you, [illegible] you to listen [illegible] as you [illegible] and would as

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either preface or apology. This affectionate mother was not able to go through the contents unaffected, and begged Mr. Stevens to read it aloud. When he had done, 'It is a painful pleasure to me,' said her 'ladyship, 'to be acquainted with my son's 'inclinations without undeceiving him; we 'will no longer torment him; I, there-'fore, intreat you, immediately to reveal 'all our scheme to him, our reasons for 'making this tryal of his heart, and tell 'him, we congratulate both him and our-'selves on its success.' Mr. Stevens obeyed her ladyship's commands, and wrote as follows:

'MY DEAR SIR,

'PRESUMING upon the generosity of 'your disposition, and in order to dis-'cover the real and unbiassed sentiments of 'your heart, I do confess I have been 'drawn in to practice much deceit towards 'you, and yet am bold enough to flatter 'myself, you will remit my transgression. 'Know, then, that the lady who has, hap-'pily, engaged your admiration and 'esteem,

'eſteem, is no other than Fanny Stevens, 'the beloved ſiſter of that man who is un-'der ſuch infinite obligations to you. My 'grandfather has bid good night to this 'lower world, and, poor man, though late, 'relented, and beſtowed a proviſion upon 'us, far beyond our humble expectations; 'my ſiſter is now entitled to eighteen thou-'ſand pounds. Believe me, ſir, her for-'tune has no other weight with me, than 'as it may ſerve to convince your relations 'and guardians, that, notwithſtanding you 'have long honoured a dependent, penny-'leſs being with your friendſhip and coun-'tenance, you have not choſen a beggar 'for your wife. The nobleneſs of your diſ-'poſition, your underſtanding and ſobriety, 'are, with me, more valuable recommenda-'tions, than your title and fortune; and I 'would much rather be allied to the one, 'than intitled to the other. Fanny's appro-'bation of you is apparent, through the 'all proper diſguiſes of virgin modeſty: ſhe 'muſt, indeed, have been blind, had ſhe 'remained unſuſceptible of the uncommon

'qualifications you are maſter of. This 'was my apprehenſion, when you expreſ'ſed a deſire of engaging Mr. Finch to 'give my mother and her an invitation to 'Brightley; I borrowed the hint from 'you, and hope you will pardon an inno'cent ſtratagem, which you yourſelf ſug'geſted to my imagination. Lady Bright'ley, in conjunction with miſs Shelburne, 'Mr. and Mrs. Finch, have been aiding 'and aſſiſting. The poor girl and your'ſelf, were alone, ignorant of our deſigns. 'We have complimented each other, in 'very high terms, on our newly diſcovered 'talent for plotting, the ſucceſs of our un'dertaking inconteſtably evincing, even in 'the moſt rigid judgement, our ſkill and 'abilities. If we are ſo happy as to be ac'quitted by you, we ſhall greatly rejoice; 'judge, then, how your applauſe would 'exalt us! I am, with the moſt unfeigned 'reſpect and regard,

'your moſt obedient, &c.'

A ſer-

A ſervant was diſpatched with this epiſtle to the baronet, who received it with a trembling hand. On examining its contents, he doubted of the reality of his exiſtence, fancied all around him was deluſion, and, in ſhort, was as romantic in his imagination, as any hero upon antient record could be. When his ſurpriſe began to ſubſide, and he was capable of recalling his ſcattered reaſon, he ordered the ſervant to tell Mr. Stevens, he ſhould be glad to ſee him for a few moments. No ſooner was the meſſage delivered, than that gentleman flew to the apartment of his friend. 'I hope,' ſaid Mr. Stevens, on entering the room, 'I have not deceived myſelf with 'vain expectations, but that my patron and 'benefactor is diſpoſed to give me my ac-'cuſtomed ſhare in his valued friendſhip 'and heart?'

'Stevens,' returned the baronet, taking him by the hand, 'you ought to know 'my diſpoſition; my affection for you was 'undiminiſhed, even at the moment I 'ſhunned

'shunned you moſt. Be aſſured I could as
'ſoon ceaſe to exiſt, as diſeſteem you, and
'that I have my every wiſh accompliſhed,
'in being enabled to confirm my late attach-
'ment, by a brotherly alliance, and in receiv-
'ing your worthy parent for my ſecond mo-
'ther. Do flatter me, I am now diſpoſed to
'take large draughts. Tell me I am not diſ-
'agreeable to your amiable ſiſter; that ſhe
'conſents to unite her fate with mine, and
'that it ſhall not be long before our happy
'union ſhall be compleated. When ſhall
'I be introduced to her? Is ſhe not to be
'informed of all your proceedings? Will
'not your mother viſit us, and confer her
'approbation upon me, before the indiſ-
'ſoluble knot is tied? Anſwer me all theſe
'queſtions, my brother and my friend!' 'I
'have now an opportunity,' ſaid Mr. Ste-
vens, 'of taking a moſt pleaſing revenge
'upon you, for the raillery you once played
'off upon me, and of laughing at the cha-
'moured baronet in turn; but I will ſpare
'you, and beg you may no longer diſtreſs
'your-

'yourſelf from a place where your compa-
'ny is impatiently expected.'

They immediately repaired to the break-faſt chamber, where they were no ſooner arrived than, 'My ſon,' ſaid the delighted lady Brightley, 'this is, indeed, a happy 'day! I approve miſs Stevens as much as 'you can admire her, and ſhall, with un-'feigned pleaſure, receive and bleſs my 'long-elected, worthy daughter. May years 'of uninterrupted felicity await you, nor 'the miſerable fate of an early ſeparation 'attend you!' 'O my mother,' ſaid ſir William, 'had you not been propitious to 'my choice, I muſt ſtill have been wretch-'ed! for it is your conſent alone can ſtamp 'happineſs on a deſign of this nature. You 'will, I hope, love your daughter, from 'the united incitements of her great merit, 'as a woman, and tenderneſs, faith, and 'affection, as a wife. How my aunt will 'be brought to approve our intentions, I 'know not, but I ſuppoſe it will not be 'neceſſary to conſult her.' 'You ſhall,

'my

'my dear,' returned lady Brightley, 'pay 'her the compliment to invite her and her 'husband to your wedding; if she declines 'the invitation, you have no want of duty 'or reſpect to accuſe yourſelf with. She 'is your father's ſiſter, a conſideration 'which ought ſo far to cancel the remem-'brance of the weak ſide of her character, 'as to prevent your ſullying yours by a 'deficiency on your part.'

Miſs Forteſcue ſighed at this happy ſcene; not from envy, as that was a paſſion her gentle boſom was unacquainted with, but from the painful reflection of the different compoſition of her father's heart, to this good lady's.

Sir William haſtily diſpatched his breakfaſt, and, ſtealing from the company, flew to Mr. Finch's. 'My good friend,' ſaid he, 'I have many things to thank you 'for; I have had a myſtery unravelled to 'me this morning, in the compoſing of 'which, I underſtand, you was a princi-

'pal

'pal agent. I have declared my love, my 'mother her approbation, and, I am en- 'couraged to hope, miſs Stevens will not 'withold her confirming voice, as, on that 'alone, our whole felicity is dependant. 'Pray, ſir, where is the lady?

'O dear ſir,' returned Mr. Finch, 'be 'not impatient, I dare believe ſhe will not 'take flight; you were certainly deſigned 'by nature for each other; for, I do aſſure 'you, ſhe is of a moſt valuable diſpoſition. 'Tell me, young gentleman, are you wil- 'ling to reward the noble part I have ſuſ- 'tained in this drama, by permitting me 'the honour of conferring the child of my 'much eſteemed friend upon you?' 'I 'know no one,' replied ſir William, 'from 'whoſe hands I would more gladly receive 'her; and wiſh you could perform the 'ſame grateful office for my friend, and 'make him happy with miſs Shelburne.'

'You are a graceleſs youth,' returned Mr. Finch, 'would you deſtroy your aunt

'at

'at once? Think you that your marriage 'with the ſtroller's ſiſter, will not wound 'her deep enough? She would never, I 'am certain, ſurvive, the complicated 'blow.' 'I have,' ſaid ſir William, 'this 'day two months, to that grand anniver-'ſary of my birth, which will intitle me to 'the management of my fortune, and my 'neighbours to a revelling bout. If I can 'prevail upon miſs Stevens, to beſtow her 'hand upon me at that period, the glad-'neſs of my own heart, ſhall be communi-'cated to thouſands.' 'Never doubt it, 'ſir,' ſaid Mr. Finch, 'you have ſo many 'advocates to plead your cauſe, that ſuc-'ceſs muſt be yours.' 'I hope you will 'not exclude my boy Charles and Mrs. Ste-'vens, from a participation of the general 'joy? and to my certain knowledge, my 'brother Finch would gladly make one at 'ſuch a feſtival.' 'There ſhall not one 'of them be neglected,' returned the ba-ronet.

Mrs.

Mrs. Finch and miſs Stevens, making their appearance, gave a turn to the converſation. The baronet became ſilent, Mr. Finch laughed aloud, the ladies were ſurpriſed, and looked, with curious meaning on the officer.

'Why truly,' ſaid that gentleman, 'the 'baronet has been conſulting about fix-'ing his wedding day, and appointing 'the particular regulation of it. Mrs. 'Stevens, our Charles, and my gouty 'brother, are to be invited; yet no ſoon-'er did the blooming bride elect, ap-'pear, than ſilence ſealed the lips of my 'loquacious companion.' Mrs: Finch had too much good nature and delicacy, to enjoy the confuſion of the lovely pair. 'I 'really am angry with you,' Mr. Finch,' ſaid ſhe, 'for your abrupt, ill-timed rail-'lery. But defeat his purpoſe, ſir Wil-'liam, diſappoint him, for once, of a plea-'ſure he does not deſerve, at my requeſt, 'by diſregarding what he ſays; nor do you 'my Fanny, be in the leaſt diſconcerted.'

In

In order to relieve the lovers, this lady rang the bell for the tea-kettle, and hurried the breakfaſt. Miſs Stevens's heart underwent a moſt uncommon agitation; from ſurpriſe and uncertainty, ſhe longed for, yet dreaded, an explanation of Mr. Finch's behaviour; nor did the baronet enjoy much more compoſure. Mr. Finch, in obedience to his lady's requeſting eyes, withdrew, an example ſhe ſoon followed herſelf, and left the baronet at liberty, to explain her huſband's behaviour.

Miſs Stevens made an effort to retire, but was gently oppoſed by ſir William. 'Pardon me, madam,' ſaid he, 'the diſ-'order I have occaſioned you, by the honeſt 'bluntneſs of our common friend. You 'had, indeed, been long the ſubject of 'our converſation, I have my mother's 'conſent to ſolicit your hand and heart, 'will not miſs Stevens make her friends 'happy, by the acceptance of one, who is 'favoured with, and encouraged by, their 'general approbation?'

'I, ſir,'

'I, ſir, have no will of my own,' replied miſs Stevens.' 'You muſt, you muſt,' interrupted the baronet, 'condeſcend to be more than paſſive in an affair of ſo nice and delicate a nature. Your compliance with my humble ſolicitations, muſt be voluntary, flowing from ſome happy ſympathy you feel. You muſt pronounce my felicity with your own lovely lips; the voice of another will not ſatisfy. There is no impropriety in granting this requeſt, for if miſs Stevens can receive me for her companion and friend, and confirm that reception by the moſt ſolemn of engagements, in the preſence of a full congregation, ſurely ſhe may reconcile a whiſper in my favour alone, and unobſerved, as we are at preſent, with her ſtricteſt notions of decorum.' 'I ſir, am ſenſible of your merit,' returned miſs Stevens, 'and approve it with my whole heart.' 'Say then, my beloved girl,' replied the baronet, 'you conſent to my happineſs; and that the day, on which I ſhall attain the age of maturity, ſhall give

'your beſt affections.' 'Ah, ſir,' ſaid the lovely maid, 'do not attempt to precipi-'tate me---is the period you mention an 'early one?' 'No, no, madam, it is at 'the diſtance of two complete months, 'before which time, you ſhall have the 'pleaſure of your good mother's company, 'to ſtrengthen and ſupport your reſolu-'tion; ſuffer me then to look forward to 'that period, as a happy one indeed.' 'The obligations you have conferred upon 'my dear brother, had, long before I be-'held you, ſir,' ſaid miſs Stevens, 'en-'gaged my higheſt gratitude and eſteem; 'wonder not then at the eaſy conqueſt you 'have gained, the generous friendſhip, 'the benignity and benevolence with which 'your heart is replete, diſpel my fears, 'and plead your cauſe with irreſiſtible 'eloquence.'

The baronet ſpent ſeveral agreeable hours with his miſtreſs, and then returned to the hall, and imparted his ſucceſs, to his aſſembled friends, who congratulated him on his approaching happineſs. Lady Brightley

Brightley was well pleaſed at the choſen day, and adviſed Mr. Stevens to apply to miſs. Shelburne's father, for his conſent, to wed his daughter at the ſame happy juncture.

. . . . . .

While things were in this ſituation, Mrs. Slaughter's evil genius prompted her once more to attempt the deſtruction of Mr. Stevens's hopes, of marrying her niece. The voice of fame had conveyed to her infidel ears, the incredible news of Mr. Stevens's change of fortune, which report ſhe was reſolved to diſbelieve. She valued herſelf upon her preciſion, and was heard to declare, that if lady Brightley choſe to exalt a beggar, from a groſs impoſition of a grandfather's noble proviſion for her, who himſelf was never worth a groat, ſhe would take care to prevent Mr. Slaughter's family being taken in. This declaration, did not, however, reach the knowledge of lady Brightley and her friends, for ſome time. Mr. Stevens addreſſed the father of his beloved, in the following terms.

'SIR,

'SIR,

'NOtwithſtanding the unfavourable light in which I was once repreſented to you, I hope I may, without offence, apply to you at this time (the death of my grandfather having intitled me to three thouſand pounds per annum) for your conſent to pay my addreſſes to your amiable daughter. In return for which favour, I will ſettle upon her, one third of my fortune, without requiring a ſhilling at your hands, either now, or hereafter, but as I may merit your favour. My attorney ſhall wait upon you with my rent-roll, if you require it, as I would not leave a ſhadow of doubt in your mind, concerning the reality of what I profeſs. Lady Brightley does me the honor to encloſe this in a letter of her own. May you, ſir, prove as propitious to my wiſhes, as the contents of her ladyſhip's letter is favourable to me.

'I am, ſir, &c.'

Lady

Lady Brightley's addreſs ran thus.

'SIR,

'FROM a principle of gratitude, I intereſt myſelf ſo far in the happineſs of 'the young gentleman who now applies to 'you for permiſſion to addreſs miſs Shelburne, that I take the liberty of accompanying his letter with a recommendatory 'one from me. He has, for ſome years, 'been the companion of my ſon, in which 'capacity he approved himſelf worthy of 'the higheſt approbation. His family is 'genteel, his education has been liberal, 'and his fortune is now very conſiderable. 'By the ſeverity of his grandfather, he was 'once reduced to narrow circumſtances, in 'which condition, his greatneſs of mind, 'and integrity, ſhone with continued luſtre. 'My ſon, and his ſiſter, are to be united 'on the ſeventeenth day of September next. 'If my example can have any weight, my 'opinion, the ſmalleſt conſideration, or 'my importunity perſuade, beſtow your

'worthy daughter upon honeſt Stevens. 'Their diſpoſitions are calculated for happineſs in union with each other; but if 'denied that felicity, you may, perhaps, 'hereafter lament your inattention to my 'advice, and your diſregard of confirmed 'and well attested merit.

'I am, ſir, &c.

The heart of Mr. Stevens was afflicted with many forboding unfavourable pangs, and when the poſt arrived with a letter for lady Brightley, he was ſeized with an univerſal tremor. On her ladyſhip's opening it, ſhe was aſtoniſhed to find theſe words,

'MADAM,

'I Believe you are a very well-meaning, 'but if you will give yourſelf the trou-'ble to read the encloſed, you will find 'yourſelf a miſtaken woman. The fel-'low you would recommend to me, muſt 'be maſter of a deep deſigning wicked 'heart, as well as an extenſive invention;

'or

'or he could never have trumped up ſuch 'a vile and impudent falſehood. A likely 'ſtory, indeed, that a man poſſeſſed of 'three thouſand pounds a year, would ex-'poſe an innocent grand-child to the ne-'ceſſity of ſitting under a hedge, to beg 'charity of every paſſenger! I wiſh my 'girl had never gone into the country: I 'love her, and therefore do'nt care to 'ſet her a whining, but I muſt ſay, that 'the ſooner ſhe can wean her affection ſo 'far, from a little dirty village, as to be 'willing to return to her father's, the 'ſooner will ſhe reſtore him that ſatisfac-'tion of heart, ſhe has ſo long deprived 'him of, by her obſtinacy and illneſs. I 'wiſh ſhe would learn to be dutiful to her 'relations, before ſhe thinks of becoming 'a wife.

'I am, madam, &c.'

Before lady Brightley would permit her audience to comment upon this boorish epiſtle, ſhe read the incloſed.

'DEAR SIR,

'I Cannot anſwer it to the character of 'a ſiſter and friend, to omit putting 'you upon your guard, againſt a vile im- 'poſition which is now contriving, to catch 'your conſent for a beggar's becoming 'your ſon-in-law. Lady Brightley, I un- 'derſtand, is determined to eſpouſe his 'cauſe. Poor woman, ſhe is turned with 'every blaſt by her unworthy ſon; he has 'already flown in my face, notwithſtanding 'the days and nights I have watched over 'him, with a more than maternal care. 'Juſtice obliges me to give him up. This 'villain, Stevens, has ſo wrought upon 'him, that he is ripe for every deceitful 'undertaking he pleaſes to propoſe. Your 'daughter has long been the deſtined prey 'of this unworthy, low-born being, and, 'I am ſorry to add, has met with but too 'much encouragement from her. My ne- 'phew has, likewiſe, had a ſight of his 'ſiſter, an artful young huſſy, and has 'taken it into his wiſe head to like her ſo

'well,

'well, that no leſs will ſatisfy him, but 'making lady Brightley of her. Now my 'poor eaſy ſiſter, allured by the flattering 'report theſe boy's have concerted to 'ſpread, merely to anſwer their private 'purpoſe, has given her conſent (I have 'ſcarce patience to write it) but ſhe has 'actually given her conſent, to accept this 'inveigling, mean creature, for her daugh-'ter-in-law. As my name is no longer 'Brightley, I can better brook this prepoſ-'terous match, than Lucy's with the inſo-'lent fellow. I ſhall diſpoſe my fortune, 'you may be certain, in my niece's fa-'vour, if ſhe does not obſtruct my good 'intentions, by throwing herſelf away upon 'a vagabond. I hope you will not diſ-'regard this ſeaſonable caution, from your, '&c.

'ANN SLAUGHTER.'

Diſappointment and diſmay ſat upon the brow of the unhappy Mr. Stevens, but lady Brightley treated Mr. Shelburne's letter as a light concern. 'It muſt be your 'immediate buſineſs,' ſaid ſhe, 'to con-

'vince him of the reality of your fortune, 'for which purpoſe I will ſend him a letter 'of invitation to Brightley.' So ſaying, ſhe wrote as follows.

'SIR,

'I WAVE every ungenteel part of your 'letter, and will only take notice of its 'moſt material contents. You inveigh, 'with great virulence, againſt a young 'man, whom the pen of prejudice alone 'has repreſented to you, in an unfavour-'able light; give me leave, then, once 'more to aſſure you, that he is not the 'creature a relation of mine would induce 'you to believe. Why then will you ſuffer 'yourſelf to be the dupe of a woman's 'malice? Nay, more, to become the tool 'of her reſentment, and ſacrifice the hap-'pineſs and advantage of your beloved 'child, to malicious tales, and groundleſs 'fables? The diſtance from London to 'Brightley is not ſo great, but a journey 'hither, you will find, on reflection, an 'eligible undertaking, to diſabuſe yourſelf.

My

'My houſe ſhall be at your ſervice, com-
'mand my chariot to conduct you hither,
'bring an able council with you to examine
'Stevens's title to the fortune he men-
'tions, and if I have deceived you, your
'daughter ſhall return home with you; if
'you ſhould find it otherwiſe, you will cer-
'tainly act like a reaſonable creature, and
'conſent to your daughter's becoming the
'wife of a rich and worthy man.

'I am, &c.'

Miſs Shelburne ſaid ſhe was much miſ-taken, if that letter had not the deſired effect, but profeſſed herſelf much concern-ed at the trouble ſhe had brought upon her ladyſhip. 'Mention it not, my good 'girl,' returned this worthy woman, 'I 'ſhall receive ample compenſation, if I am 'but ſo happy as to accompliſh your union. 'It is a common act of juſtice to detect the 'baſe deſigns of the wicked, and vindicate 'the innocent. Mr. Stevens has incurred 'this fiery perſecution, merely on my ſon's 'and my account; therefore he has a right

'to command our beſt ſervices.' 'We will 'patiently wait the reſult of this laſt appli-'cation, but I forbid,' continued her lady-ſhip, ſmiling, and looking on Mr. Stevens,' 'all clouded brows and biting of 'nails.'

The baronet and miſs Stevens, enjoyed halcyon days, they had neither ſtorm nor tempeſt to contend with, but an uninterrupted ſunſhine ſpread itſelf around them. Lady Brightley had all her jewels new ſet for a preſent to the bride, and made an excurſion, accompanied by her ſon and Mr. Stevens, on horſeback, with miſs Shelburne and miſs Forteſcue in her coach, to conduct the old lady, her intended daughter's mother, to Brightley. She had not yet quitted her peaceful cottage, which they found conformable to Mr. Slaughter's deſcription, rural, romantic, and beautiful. Its ſituation was on the declivity of a hill, the brow and deſcent of which was adorned with various flowery ſhrubs, ſweetly interſperſed, the fragrance where-

of

of perfumed the ambient air. At the bottom of this parnaſſus was a grove, where the loves and graces might have delighted to wanton. A little rivulet, ſweeping with a ſerpentine gracefulneſs, contributed not a little to heighten the beauty, and refreſh, by its frequent overflowing, the ſurrounding verdant meads. Six lambkins gambolled on the lawn, and cropped the graſs and frolicked at their will. At a ſmall diſtance was a rookery; the ſolemn ſtillneſs, the lofty pines, and melancholy caw of their black inhabitants, pleaſed miſs Forteſcue extremely, and, for the firſt time, extorted from her expreſſions of approbation. That I may not diſguſt the polite reader, I will not dwell longer on this deſcription, only beg leave to mention, to prevent my incurring the imputation of a fabuliſt, that the hill, the lawn, the rookery, and rivulet, were all in miniature, and did not contain many roods of land.

Mrs. Stevens, though quite unprepared for this viſit, was the picture of neatneſs.

Aſſiſted by one of her maids, ſhe was diſpoſing of a collection of fine flowers, in a brace of China cornu-copia's, the roſes dropped from her hands, at the ſight of her beloved child, and the tear of joy bedued her venerable cheek. 'Alas,' ſaid ſhe, 'I was ſo faithleſs as to deſpair of 'ever again beholding the face of my 'Frank, but bleſſings have been even 'multiplied upon my head, in theſe my 'declining days, and the reſtoration of my 'ſon is one of the moſt valuable.'

Mr. Stevens then preſented his mother to lady Brightley: 'Pardon me, madam,' ſaid Mrs. Stevens, 'for yielding to the tran-'ſports of nature, unmindful of your pre-'ſence, and the gratitude and reſpect I 'owe you. To you, I am indebted for 'the pleaſure that now warms my heart, 'for had you not ſheltered and cheriſhed 'that plant of my affection, the killing 'froſt of poverty had, e're now, blaſted 'him for ever.'

'If,'

'If,' answered lady Brightley, 'there 'was any merit in affording an asylum to 'a worthy youth, qualified by nature and 'education to shine in a different sphere, to 'my son, madam, not to me, must it be 'imputed; my caution was superior to my 'generosity, and prompted me to endea-'vour to persuade sir William to re-'nounce his attachment to a stranger, 'merely for his being such. He will now 'be repaid ten fold for his kindness to 'the brother, by having the sister bestow-'ed upon him, for a constant friend and 'companion.'

'Forgive me, miss Shelburne,' said Mr. Stevens, 'if I bring my dear mother ac-'quainted with my benefactor, previous to 'my introduction of you. To him I owe 'the prosperity of my days, to him the 'unspeakable satisfaction of conversing 'with you, and to his mother (if I do ob-'tain that inestimable blessing,' continued he sighing) 'the confirmation of my earthly 'felicity, as your hand will be yielded, not

'to mine, but her intreaty. This, my 'venerable parent,' ſaid the grateful Stevens, 'is that noble youth who raiſed me 'from the utmoſt deſpondency and wretch-'edneſs, to be the friend of his heart, and 'companion of his days; by his bounty 'have I been able to baniſh diſtreſs from 'your little habitation, and preſerve your 'heart from ſinking under the depreſſions 'of want and miſery.'

The old lady gazed upon the baronet, with gliſtening eyes, and ſaid, 'You are, you will 'be my ſon! My prayers and bleſſing will 'conſequently be your due, and I have no-'thing left to offer. Your reward is yet in 'ſtore, and an abundant happineſs will a-'wait you, for protecting the fatherleſs, and 'cauſing the heart of the widow to ſing 'with joy.' Then looking wiſtfully on the 'two young ladies, 'Frank,' ſaid ſhe, 'which 'is my daughter elect?' (miſs Shelburne bluſhing, ſhe continued) 'I read it, madam, 'in your countenance; may my ſon never 'forfeit, by any unworthy action, the

'good

'good opinion you favour him with, but 'well conſider the duties of tenderneſs and 'affection incumbent upon his character.'

'This,' ſaid Mr. Stevens, taking miſs Forteſcue's hand, 'is a little friend we greatly 'eſteem. Fanny could not be of the party, 'becauſe a place in the coach was reſerved 'for you.' 'For me, child,' repeated Mrs. Stevens, 'what do you mean?' 'Why 'madam,' returned lady Brightley, 'ſurely you did not imagine, that your preſence would not be ſolicited on the approaching happy occaſion? We muſt 'have no poſſible wiſh that day ungratified, and I leave you to judge, if that 'could be the caſe, if you was to deny us 'the pleaſure of your company.'

'I, madam,' ſaid Mrs. Stevens, 'am 'far advanced in years, and labour under 'many inſuperable infirmities. I am incapable of raiſing the joy of my friends, 'and ſhould, but too probably, occaſion 'an allay of it. I believe I muſt be ex-

'cuſed.'

cuſed.' 'We will admit of no excuſe,' ſaid lady Brightley, 'you muſt return with us, our hearts are ſet upon it.'

The good old lady made no farther oppoſition to the will of her friends, but ſuffered herſelf to be conveyed to Brightley, to the great ſatisfaction of her daughter, and Mr. and Mrs. Finch.

Lady Brightley wrote to Mr. Forteſcue, and preſſed him ſo earneſtly to conſent to miſs Caroline's continuance with her, 'till after her ſon's wedding, that he could not, without being guilty of an extreme breach of good manners, avoid conſenting to it.

Young Mr. Finch had many reaſons for remaining in his ſervile capacity, with the counſellor; he was unwilling to cauſe any ſuſpicion, by too early withdrawing himſelf, and apprehended miſs Forteſcue would ſtand in need of his further aſſiſtance. He overheard a converſation, full of evil, between the counſellor and Mrs. Swinton, and

and trembled for the conſequence. When, therefore, he received a letter of invitation to attend the baronet's nuptials, he determined to delay his quitting town, until two days before the ſolemnization of them; and, if his maſter would permit him, continue amongſt his friends for a fortnight. Mrs. Rebecca preferred this petition, and was ſucceſsful. Poor miſs Caroline was concerned at his delay, "*and thought his chariot long in coming*;" little ſuſpecting the violence her lover did his inclination, in compelling himſelf to act the friend, and ſacrificing the pleaſure of her company, to the more important buſineſs of preſerving her from abſolute miſery and deſtruction.

Mr. Shelburne, was piqued, in the manner lady Brightley wiſhed, by her inſinuation of his being the tool of a woman's reſentment. Three thouſand a year, was a fortune adequate to the utmoſt of his ambition, and too much to be trifled with; he, therefore, judged it incumbent upon him, to ſearch into the fact, and diſcover which

which was, in reality, the deceived, which the malicious party. Purſuant to this intention, he conſulted a man of eminence, who, for a handſome fee, conſented to accompany him into Glocesterſhire, and examine the rent-roll and title of Mr. Stevens's eſtate. Previous to this ſtep, a ſhilling was paid at the Commons, to intitle the learned pleader to peruſe the old gentleman's will; which corroborating all that lady Brightley and the young man had advanced, Mr. Shelburne began to wiſh he had not played the fool indeed, and beſtowed many hearty curſes upon the meddling, troubleſome, captious Mrs. Slaughter. As he could not be ſpared from his buſineſs (Mr. Peat being not returned from Cornwal) longer than a week, he acquainted lady Brightley with his reſolution, in the following manner:

'MADAM,

'PRESUMING upon the goodneſs of your diſpoſition, I do hope you will 'pardon me my late infidelity and unpolite-

'neſs,

'neſs. I begin to apprehend I have been 'groſsly impoſed upon, I need not men-'tion by whom, but every miſtake ſhall 'be rectified. The gentleman cannot 'blame a father for being anxious about 'the diſpoſition of his only child; if he 'loves, and knows her worth, he will ex-'cuſe all that is paſt. I will come down, 'and bring a friend with me, on the fif-'teenth of September, and, if I find every 'thing as it ſhould be, he ſhall have my 'girl from my own hand, and my bleſſing 'into the bargain. But I ſhall not bear the 'ſight of that bad woman, who has, hither-'to, thrown duſt into my eyes, and made 'me blind to my child's advantage and 'happineſs; faithleſs, with reſpect to the 'young gentleman's merit, and deaf to 'the ſenſible remonſtrances, and kind per-'ſuaſions, of your ladyſhip.

'I am, with love to Lucy, &c.'

The face of things were now moſt agree-ably changed, and Mr. Stevens enabled to look forward with joyful hope, as well as his

his friend. Miſs Shelburne ſtarted many objections, now the doubts, with reſpect to her father, were removed, concerning the unprepared ſtate ſhe ſhould be in for ſo early a day. Her father requiring ocular demonſtration, before he gave a poſitive ſanction, would render it, ſhe ſaid, utterly impoſſible for her to provide the ſmalleſt article. Lady Brightley declared it as her opinion, that the article of cloaths was of too light conſideration to be attended to, and that ſhe might, with equal propriety, be accommodated, after the ceremony, as before. The elder Mr. Finch accepted her ladyſhip's invitation with pleaſure, as he ſaid, it would be gaining ſome hours from the gout; for he doubted not, but the ſatisfaction he ſhould enjoy on ſuch a happy occaſion, would be ſuperior to his pain. He was conducted to the village by his brother, a whole month preceding this great event; and, notwithſtanding all his infirmities, contributed greatly to enhance the good-humour and mirth of his friends. 'It is,' ſaid he, looking firſt upon the young ladies,

ties, then upon his brother, 'a very lucky 'circumſtance, that I did not viſit you be'fore theſe girls had diſpoſed of their 'hearts; for I ſhould have been very apt 'to have play'd lord Chalkſtone, by gal'lanting them a little, the conſequence of 'which would have been bloodſhed and 'confuſion amongſt my rivals.' 'There 'is ſtill one heart unengaged,' replied the old officer, 'but you, looking at his bro'ther, 'ought not to be well received by his 'poſſeſſor, for oppoſing her becoming your 'neighbour, at a certain ſeaſon.' An involuntary ſigh eſcaped miſs Forteſcue at this inſtant, and a tender emotion informed her, that Mr. Finch was greatly deceived.

Mr. Shelburne, at length, arrived at Brightley, when he was very genteely received by the whole company: His friend ſoon aſſured him Mr. Stevens was no impoſtor, and drew the inſtrument, by which miſs Lucy was intitled to the jointure Mr. Stevens had offered. The old man was then as fond and proud of his ſon, as ever he had

had been violent againſt him, and could not be prevailed on ſo far to ſubdue his reſentment, as to make Mrs. Slaughter a viſit, but declared, if ſhe was at the wedding, he ſhould not enjoy the leaſt ſatisfaction. On the morrow of Mr. Shelburne's arrival, an invitation was ſent to the curate and his lady, to attend the nuptial ceremony (the former, indeed, was to perform it) Mrs. Slaughter returned a very rough meſſage, ſignifying, that ſhe would not act ſo inconſiſtently with the dignity of her character, as to mix with company ſhe deſpiſed. No one perſon was mortified at her ungenteel declaration, nor regretted her abſence. Amongſt this general aſſembly of glad countenances, and glad hearts, was poor miſs Forteſcue a ſolitary Eve, hardly able to ſuſtain the difficult taſk, of appearing, in the *midſt of ſorrow, gay*. The evening approached, without the captain's making his appearance. Various were her perturbations, falſe alarms, and pleaſing expectations. Each trampling horſe, or ringing at the gate, occaſioned her gentle heart

heart to flutter. Robbers, accidents terrible, and bugbears innumerable, haunted her diſturbed imagination. Her lips were ſealed by dire apprehenſion, her ears undelighted with the converſation of her friends. In this diſagreeable ſituation ſhe continued for three long hours, when the arrival of the blooming hero diſpelled her every fear. The change in her behaviour was too viſible to paſs unobſerved, vivacity informed her features, and the late fair, lifeleſs ſtatue, prattled in pleaſing ſtrains.

The next morning was uſhered in with the utmoſt demonſtrations of joy. The bells (for there were a couple) were tinkled for many ſucceſſive hours; the lads and laſſes purſued their rural ſports upon the village green; open houſe was kept at the hall; joy and plenty ſeemed to have commenced their reign. The firſt ceremony performed by the reverend Mr. Slaughter, united the happy baronet and amiable miſs Stevens, in one common lot, an office that procured him a moſt genteel gratuity. Mr. Finch beſtowed this

this valuable gift upon his young friend, who received it with all due gratitude and graceful humility. This knot was no sooner tied, than Mr. Stevens, and the lovely miss Shelburne, advanced, to follow so good an example. The literal father with pleasure beheld (and was aiding and assisting in) a disposition of his child, which some months before had been considered by him as unworthy of her, and most contemptible; so much had three thousand a year awakened him. The day was concluded with every demonstration of mirth, and without one of those accidents so incident to a rejoicing multitude.

END OF BOOK V.

BOOK

BOOK VI.

CAPTAIN Finch ſeemed now to breathe a new air, indeed; the abſence he had endured having infinitely endeared his beloved Caroline. He reflected upon the ſervice he had done her, as the nobleſt action of his life, and promiſed himſelf ſtill to perſevere with his former generoſity. 'Nothing but the laſt extremity,' ſaid he, 'ſhall extort the ſecret from me, that it is 'I to whom this lovely maid is indebted for 'her preſent eaſe and tranquility. I would 'recommend myſelf to her affection on 'friendſhip's baſis, gratitude is too com-'pulſive an attraction for an ingenuous 'mind, and may, ſometimes, be miſtaken,

'by

'by the inexperienced and undiſtinguiſh-
'ing, for love itſelf, it being a paſſion, in
'ſome ſort, congenial. It is a ſofter incli-
'nation with which I would wiſh to inſpire
'the gentle breaſt of miſs Forteſcue; it is
'eſteem, friendſhip, tenderneſs and affec-
'tion, ſtrongly and intimately blended,
'that conſtitute true love. A great ſoul
'may be thankful to the author of its ſatiſ-
'faction, the enlarger of its fortune, or
'preſerver or reſtorer of its liberty, though
'unable to unite that tender principle re-
'quiſite to love, and which is, indeed, its
'eſſence.'

The fourteen days limited for Mr. Finch's abſence from his maſter, too ſoon elapſed, bleſſed, as he was, with the company and approbation of his Caroline. Diſſimulation is a practice unknown to native ſimplicity, and diſguiſes alone are neceſſary to cover guilt. Miſs Forteſcue's innocence contemned their aid, what *ſhe thought in her heart, might be read in her eyes*, and her actions, ſpontaneouſly, flowed from the dictates

of

of honeſt nature; conſequently, her favourable conſideration of Mr. Finch could not be long a ſecret, tho' unconfeſſed by her lips. The ſpeaking ſilence her eyes poſſeſſed revealed it all. The captain's return, and retention of his maſter's and favourite houſekeeper's good liking, were of too much conſequence to be diſregarded by him. He departed, therefore, from Brightley, ſupported only by the reflections of well-doing, and well-meriting. He knew his Caroline muſt ſoon follow him, but did not conſider, that he, alone, ſhould derive felicity from that event, as ſhe imagined ſhe had parted with him for a long, long ſeaſon, on his quitting Brightley. He found, on his reſuming his humble ſtation, that miſchief was gathering thick; every look was threatening, every word ambiguous. He was too much alarmed, not to think it neceſſary to put miſs Forteſcue on her guard, by intimating her danger; he, therefore, wrote as follows:

'MADAM,

'AS you will, shortly, be summoned 'to return to a dangerous situation, 'it may not be improper to inform you, 'that your invisible friend still exists, and 'is as much devoted to your service as ever. 'Great designs are planning, nay, I fear, 'they are cruel ones. I cannot, at this 'juncture, ascertain the nature of them, 'but, if you will examine the wonted re-'pository on your return, you shall find a 'more explicit account, as the mischief 'will then be riper, and, perhaps, greater 'discoveries made. This caution I must, 'however, give you, not to be, in reality, 'intimidated by any threats; if they should 'propose a journey to you, comply with 'seeming, not heart-felt, reluctance, for, 'be assured, you shall be delivered; I will 'never leave nor forsake you, until you are 'arrived at a place of rest and safety. I have 'that already in my power, that shall con-'found all their devices, therefore, keep 'up your spirits, and rely entirely upon

'your most sincere friend.'

This

This letter was canvaſſed by the friendly ſociety, and cauſed an equal degree of wonder, terror, and ſatisfaction. Who this inviſible correſpondent could be, occaſioned much ſpeculation and debate. The mention of cruel deſigns that were hatching againſt the young lady's peace, terrified and concerned them; but the repeated aſſurances of the continued attachment and beſt aſſiſtance of her unknown friend, gave them great conſolation. The gentlemen were of opinion, it was ſome lover, that thus intereſted himſelf in miſs Caroline's happineſs; but were puzzled, on that young lady's declaring, that ſhe never ſaw any more than one male viſitant at her father's, and he was her appointed huſband; and that ſhe was not permitted to go any where but to church, accompanied by her father's houſekeeper. After various conjectures, and many humorous reflections, they were obliged to leave the matter as they found it, acknowledging it to be inexplicable.

'Mr. Forteſcue had kept an exact account, in his memory, of the baronet's wedding-day; and no ſooner was one ſucceeding week expired, than he wrote a polite, hypocritical letter to lady Brightley, begging the reſtoration of his daughter, and profeſſing the utmoſt ſenſe of great obligation for her ladyſhip's friendly care of her. 'My dear madam,' ſaid miſs Caroline, the tears flowing plentifully, 'how unable am I to ſpeak my gratitude for 'the extreme kindneſs and indulgence I 'have received from you! I have now 'troubled you to little purpoſe, as I have 'been delivered from one evil only to 'plunge into a greater! O my mother,' cried ſhe, 'how would your heart have 'been wounded, had you lived to ſee theſe 'days!' 'I hope,' ſaid lady Brightley, 'things are not ſo bad as you apprehend. 'Your friend will aſſiſt you in every future 'exigence, and counter-work all their bad 'deſigns. Let it be your part to mean 'well, and truſt the reſult to providence. 'Depend upon it, my good girl, we ſhall

'meet

meet again, free from theſe alarms, and afflicting ſeparations, if you do but preſerve your ſpirits undepreſſed.'

It was judged proper, by the friendly circle, that miſs Forteſcue ſhould ſeem to pay a willing obedience to her father's commands, nor betray the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion of any farther violence or perſecution, but appear to rely, with perfect confidence, on his declaration of deſiſting from his former intentions.

The good woman, who conducted this lovely girl to Brightley, was deputed to reconduct her to London. The horrid morn of cruel ſeparation arrived, attended with gloom and ſadneſs; the happineſs of the ſeveral principal inhabitants of the village was allayed, by their concern for the fate of this amiable innocent. Notwithſtanding this young lady was accommodated with the ſame carriage, horſes, and compaſſion, as in her journey to Gloceſterſhire, her return, in appearance, was ſwift as air,

in compariſon of her flight from town; her apprehenſion having rendered the latter tedious to her frighted imagination, and attended with a thouſand retarding circumſtances. Little did ſhe imagine that, in leſs than four and twenty hours, ſhe ſhould be lodged under the ſame roof with her admired hero.

On the chariot's reaching the door of her father's houſe, ſhe was ſeized with a kind of ague-fit. The ſound of the ſtopping carriage no ſooner ſaluted the captain's ears, than he flew to open the door, and, ſpite of his reſolution, and the preparing intelligence of his maſter, of miſs Caroline's being that day expected, his confuſion and joy were too powerful for him. Weak, and inſufficient, were all the brooms and bruſhes of Mrs. Rebecca, moſt perverſely croſſed and re-croſſed in the paſſage, to obſtruct his impatience to behold the object of his tendereſt regard; but wiſer had he been, had he proceeded with a ſmaller degree of love, and a larger degree of caution;

caution; for, making a falſe ſtep, as he was ſurmounting, or, rather, diſengaging himſelf from, the barriers above-mentioned, he was thrown with ſuch violence againſt the unopened door, as to occaſion a vaſt effuſion of blood. His ſtreaming noſtrils ſoon rendered him a deplorable ſpectacle, and ſuch he preſented himſelf to miſs and her companion. But as human ills are often productive of ſome unſeen good, ſo it happened in the preſent caſe; for the captain's wig, in which conſiſted all his diſguiſe, had ſlipped his unguarded head, and would, but for the beſmeared condition he was in, have infallibly betrayed him.

The good-nature of miſs Caroline was exceedingly ſhocked by the poor lad's diſaſter, brought upon him by his diligence in obliging her, little imagining, the compaſſionate expreſſions ſhe let drop, ſufficiently compenſated the captain's pangs. Unwarily, our young officer waſhed his face in the preſence of Mrs. Reed, lady Brightley's woman, who inſtantly cry'd

our, 'Good Heavens, whom do I ſee!' 'capt'----The hero, clapping his hand moſt judiciouſly upon the good woman's mouth, prevented her adding more, or all his ſchemes had been defeated, and his good purpoſes, with reſpect to miſs Forteſcue, rendered abortive. Mrs. Rebecca was moſt fortunately buſied, at this critical moment, in concerns of a domeſtic nature; miſs Caroline, attracted by a natural curioſity, was retired into a little parlour, to ſearch for a letter of information, and the counſellor was from home; ſo that Mr. Finch had juſt time to ſay, 'I intreat, Mrs. Reed, 'you will not diſcover me to any one in 'this family, not even to miſs Forteſcue; 'it is for her ſervice, though without her 'knowledge, that I have aſſumed this diſ-'guiſe! your lady will thank you for pre-'ſerving this ſecret, and I will tell you all 'at a convenient ſeaſon.' Mrs. Reed promiſed to act as deſired, and the captain made an honourable and timely retreat, and regained his diſguiſe without farther danger or difficulty. The provident law-

yer

yer had contrived to be abſent upon his daughter's arrival, to avoid the expence of either treating, or ſeeing, lady Brightley's ſervants, inſomuch that the waiting gentlewoman muſt have returned to the inn unrefreſhed, had not Frank produced a ſhilling, and generouſly treated both Rebecca and her.

Poor miſs Caroline was greatly mortified at this circumſtance; not a farthing did ſhe poſſeſs upon earth, and had a ſpirit ſuperior to mean actions. Frank, however, ſupplied every deficiency, by accommodating his brother lacqueys with a cordial a-piece, and a reward, in miſs Forteſcue's name, which ſhe was entirely unacquainted with. Lady Brightley, from a knowlege of the counſellor's ſordid diſpoſition, had ordered Mrs. Reed not to continue at his houſe for the night they were to ſtay in town, even on the moſt preſſing invitation, as they feared, however well he might preſerve appearances, during their preſence, miſs Caroline would ſuffer for it after their

departure. How unneceſſary this caution, I ſubmit to the reader's judgment, as the gentleman did not venture home until eleven o'clock at night, when he hoped to find (as he really did) the coaſt entirely clear.

Mrs. Reed poſſeſſed many good qualities; ſhe had been genteely bred, and was a woman of general veracity, yet was ſhe not proof againſt the communicative impulſes of her heart. Captain Finch had enjoined her (and ſhe had engaged to obſerve) the utmoſt ſecrecy, as his plot, he ſaid, was not yet ripe for diſcovery. But as, ſhe was well aſſured, the revealing what ſhe knew would neither be a diſſervice, or diſadvantage to him, ſhe fairly diſcharged the weight this truſt had impoſed upon her mind, to the great emolument and diverſion of the gentlemen and ladies at Brightley.

His uncle declared he honoured him for his enterpriſing ſpirit, and prompt invention,

tion, and would gladly lend a helping hand to his ſucceſs. 'If,' continued he, 'Frank 'ſhould be able to accompliſh the great 'attempt of delivering this lady from her 'inchanted caſtle, ſhe can do no leſs than 'reward him with her hand and heart; and, 'if the young dog ſhould be ſo fortunate, I 'will ſurrender an eſtate of four hundred a 'year to him (which my death would infal-'libly intitle him to) to prevent the narrow 'ſoul'd lawyer's reflecting upon his daugh-'ter's choice, as well as ſave the young 'couple from the ſin of wiſhing my death, 'and to enable the boy to prove his gene-'roſity, and proper contempt, of her paltry 'droſs. Thus,' proceeded Mr. Finch, ſenior, 'would I compromiſe with the old cur-'mudgeon, to avert every diſagreeable con-'ſequence. Let him beſtow his daughter 'upon Frank immediately, and retain her 'fortune until he kick's off the turf; it 'muſt come to our knight-errant at laſt, 'and is worth waiting for. I will, this mo-'ment, inform him of my deſign in his fa-'vour; perhaps he may be able, by his in-

'genuity, to ſtrike an advantage out of ſuch 'an intelligence.' No one attempting to oppoſe this reſolution (too favourable to the young gentleman to meet with oppoſition from his friends) he ſoon compleated the following curious epiſtle:

DEAR FRANK,

'THOU haſt, by the intrepidity, and 'ſprightlineſs of thy genius, revived 'thy uncle's heart, and put gout, rheuma-'tiſm, and all attending achs and pains, 'to the rout. I always believed you born 'for ſome great purpoſe, and therefore put 'you upon *ſeeking reputation in the cannon's mouth*; and, notwithſtanding thou haſt 'ſtood many a bounce and whiz, both of 'piſtol and gun, haſt preſerved every part 'about thee unwounded but thy heart. 'Thou haſt (once more to quote my fa-'vourite Shakeſpear) found more peril in 'the eye of beauty, than twenty thouſand 'of the enemy's ſwords. And, as *none but the Brave can deſerve the Fair*, ſo I pro-'nounce beauty, aye, even ſuch a beauty

'as

'as the amiable miſs Forteſcue, (does not 'your heart dance now?) ſhall be your re-'ward.

'But, harkee, Frank, do not diſhonour 'your profeſſion by a breach of any one 'capitulated article, but punctually per-'form the engagement you make. Let 'the fair one march out of the garriſon, 'with all her virgin honors, nor abuſe the 'power, her ſurrender gives you over her. 'Have recourſe to no mean ſubterfuges, 'nor take an ungenerous advantage. Lodge 'her in a place of ſafety, and let, whatever 'ſteps ſhe may be diſpoſed to take in your 'favour, be voluntary and ſpontaneous. 'As for old Gripus, I would not recom-'mend him to any quarter, but from his 'connexion with the ſweet Caroline. Ne-'ver ſow the ſeeds of diſobedience in the 'heart of any man's child, unleſs you 'would draw down vengeance on your 'own head. Let his avarice, his ſchemes, 'his cruelty, be abſolved in your conſider-'ation, by this ſingle remembrance, that

'he

'he is father of that woman you would 'obtain for your wife, nor once flatter 'yourſelf, that an unnatural, or undutiful 'child, will either fulfil her vows to you, 'or ſhine in a maternal character. There's 'preachment for you my boy, and ſee that 'your uncle preaches not in vain.

'This is my advice, when you have got 'the girl in your power, propoſe terms of 'accommodation with the muck-worm, re-'duce him to reaſon by your diſintereſted 'conceſſions, bid him keep his dirty droſs, 'till he can keep it no longer, and aſſure 'him that four hundred a year (an eſtate I 'will put you into poſſeſſion of the day 'you become a huſband) and ſo lovely a 'girl as Caroline Forteſcue, will amply con-'tent you; and you ought to be hanged if 'you do not in that reſpect, ſpeak your 'honeſt ſentiments: mind that young 'blade.

'We long to have you amongſt us, to 'hear you relate your adventures. Oh, 'this

"this undertaking, [illegible]
"devil does not [illegible]
"must be [illegible]
"many a [illegible]
"my boy, let [illegible]
"your motto, [illegible]
"late love-sick [illegible]
"Stevens. [illegible]
"favoured their [illegible]
"out your [illegible]
"your brow. I [illegible]
"bravery, and [illegible]
"tions in your [illegible]
"and admire you.

[illegible]

Mr. Finch's mortification [illegible] ery of Mrs. Reed, [illegible] the generosity of [illegible] commission was inadequate to support even himself, and such greatness of mind did he possess, that he would have died, rather than involve the woman he loved, in the difficulties and inconveniences of life. But four hundred pounds a year, in such

ſuch a village as Brightley, ſurrounded by ſuch an invaluable ſet of friends, loving as he did, and equally beloved, was, to his imagination, the ſummit of human bliſs. To be able to convince his Caroline, that her happineſs was dearer to him than her fortune, to ſilence the avaritious, and conſequently outrageous, cries of her diſappointed father, by leaving him in the full poſſeſſion, of what he preferred to every natural tye, or tender conſideration, and prove to the world that he was not a beggar, though by no means ſuitable in circumſtance with miſs Forteſcue, gave him the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction he had ever enjoyed.

Miſs Caroline, upon ſearching the wonted repoſitory, found a very alarming account of her father's intention towards her, in the following words.

"IT grieves me, madam, to be obliged to increaſe thoſe apprehenſions, I would, at the hazard of my life, endeavour to diminiſh;

'diminiſh; but your father is come to a 'deſperate, and, permit me to ſay, cruel 'reſolution. The woman to whom he now 'pays his addreſſes, is, as the papiſt's 'phraſe it, a good catholick, and has per- 'ſuaded Mr. Forteſcue, that, in order to 'puniſh your diſobedience, in rejecting 'the huſband he had choſen for you, you 'ought to be devoted to a cloiſter. A re- 'bellious daughter, ſhe ſays, is a calamity 'no man in his ſenſes would tolerate, and 'have it in his power, if not to reduce her 'to reaſon, with reſpect to his propoſition, 'to deliver himſelf from her. She declares 'herſelf an enemy to violence, nor would 'ſhe conſent to her nephew's being united 'to an unthinking, ungrateful girl, who 'muſt be compelled to make herſelf hap- 'py. Your fortune, my dear madam (par- 'don my advancement of this fact) your 'fortune will be as effectually ſecured to 'their poſſeſſion and uſe, by this ſacrifice 'of you, as by a matrimonial one, which 'is the incitement alone, of the ſchemes 'and plots that have been, and are premé- 'ditating

'ditating againſt you. To morrow, a jour-
'ney to Paris will be propoſed to you, as
'merely a journey of pleaſure and improve-
'ment; Mrs. Swinton has many friends,
'ſhe will tell you, to receive you; Mrs.
'Rebecca is to be your attendant, and has,
'already received her vile commiſſion, for
'the execution of which ſhe is to be well
'rewarded; you are to be conveyed im-
'mediately to a nunnery, well known to
'Mrs. Swinton; and your generous, hu-
'mane, and honeſt conductreſs is charg-
'ed with an epiſtle of inſtruction for the
'lady abbeſs, with reſpect to the diſpoſi-
'tion of you. I beg miſs Forteſcue to be
'as little concerned as poſſible, at this in-
'formation, nor unwillingly deceive the
'cruel deceiver; comply with their foreign
'propoſal with ſeeming reluctance, and
'prepare yourſelf to meet on your landing
'at Calais, your reſcuing friend, whoſe in-
'viſible ſervice muſt then come to a pe-
'riod. The day of your departure will
'be that of your father's wedding, but
'fear no evil conſequence from that event,

'your

'your friend will not ſerve you by halves; 'he has every one of the confederate parties 'in his power, and will make ſuch terms 'for you, as ſhall be intirely conſiſtent 'with your ſatisfaction and happineſs.

'I am, &c.'

Miſs Forteſcue's trembling hand, could ſcarce retain this fatal letter, the inhumanity of her father ſhocked her gentle nature, and ſhe lamented her near connexion and affinity with a man, capable of ſuch unnatural proceedings.

The next morning convinced her that ſhe had not been miſinformed, for the artful Mrs. Swinton breakfaſted at her father's, and, affecting to be particularly attached to miſs Caroline, aſked the lawyer at what ſchool his daughter had been educated; and upon that gentleman's frank acknowledgement of the little attention he had paid to the young lady in that reſpect, ſhe exclaimed againſt him in a moſt violent manner. 'I proteſt,' ſaid ſhe, 'Mr.

'For,

'Forteſcue, I little thought you capa-
'ble of ſo groſs a neglect. Surely you
'have adopted Mahometan principles, and
'conceive us women to have no ſouls.
'Your daughter, without a compliment
(bowing with all the bewitching grace of
artificial kindneſs) 'has an underſtanding
'that would baniſh this narrow error, from
'the heart of the moſt rigid Muſſulman.
'It would certainly be impertinent in me
'to preſcribe, or I could recommend a
'ſtep that would perfectly atone for your
'paſt omiſſions.' 'Madam,' returned the
counſellor, 'whatever you can propoſe, I
'am perſuaded I muſt approve, as I am
'too well convinced of your diſcretion
'and judgment, to heſitate or debate.'
'Then,' returned Mrs. Swinton, 'I ſhould
'think it highly requiſite to ſend miſs Ca-
'roline to a nunnery at Paris; I myſelf,
'was brought up in one, and, conſe-
'quently, am enabled to judge of the
'great advantage of education they afford.
'Their method of inſtruction is not like
'our Engliſh ſchools, laborious, and diſ-
'taſteful

'taſteful to a young mind, but is ſo charm-'ingly adapted to the fancy and inclination 'of youth, that the moſt difficult branches 'are attained with the greateſt facility. I 'proteſt, miſs, if it were my caſe, I would 'never ceaſe ſoliciting my father, until I 'obtained his conſent, to his ſituating me 'in one of thoſe agreeable and delightful 'retirements.'

'Madam,' replied miſs Caroline, with an heſitation occaſioned by the tremor this converſation had thrown upon her ſpirits, 'I am an incompetent judge of 'this matter; my father has a right to 'diſpoſe of me as he pleaſes, I have en-'gaged to comply, and ſhall not there-'fore prove refractory, to whatever he 'may determine for me.' This ſcheming pair caſt an exulting glance at each other, and Mr. Forteſcue, with the politeneſs (and indeed ſincerity) of a courtier, ſubmitted himſelf to the ſuperior judgement of the lady, and, in leſs than half an hour, miſs Caroline's journey to France was concluded, the day of her departure fixed, her attendant

attendant and conductreſs appointed; and the nunnery choſen for her reception was the very ſame as Mrs. Swinton had formerly been placed in.

Theſe preliminaries adjuſted, the few neceſſary preparations were inſtantly ſet about, and ſuch diligence and induſtry, were uſed on the occaſion, that, on the third enſuing day, the young lady and her grim duenna, departed; and being accommodated with a creature of Mrs. Swinton's, who ſpoke French, and was to be their interpreter, a light carriage, and able horſes, they ſoon reached their deſtined inn at Dover, where they were detained ſome hours by the perverſe winds. The canonical hour no ſooner commenced, the very morning that conveyed miſs Caroline from London, than the nuptials were ſolemnized, between the lawyer and Mrs. Swinton, who congratulated and re-congratulated each other, on their ſucceſs.

During

During this ceremony, Mr. Frank took a French leave of them, and aſſuming the diſguiſe of an old man, haſtened after his beloved girl, and arrived at Dover in due ſeaſon. He well knew the houſe in which his Caroline was to be lodged, and, conſequently occupied the ſame, and engaged a paſſage in that very pacquet that was to tranſport her from her native country. They were all ſafely diſembarked on the French dominions, and Mr. Finch being well acquainted with the inn-keeper at Calais, whoſe houſe, by his pre-appointment, they were to occupy, haſtened on before, and eaſily effected his every purpoſe. The poſtillion of the chaiſe, hired by Mrs. Rebecca to carry them to Paris, on being adminiſtered a retaining fee, and promiſed a handſome gratuity, on compleating the captain's deſire, engaged to follow his inſtructions with the utmoſt exactneſs. The interpreter, by the aſſiſtance of the landlord, was rendered incapable of attending them, by a fit of intemperance, and was to remain in the innkeeper's care, until the return

return of the pacquet, when, by Mr. Finch's orders, he was to be re-conveyed to England.

The chaiſe driver undertook to perform the office of interpreter, which reconciled them to the misfortune of loſing the one they had brought with them; and they purſued their journey, early the next morning, nothing doubting. The lad, as a ſpecimen of his beſt ſervices, or rather agreeable to the directions he had received, ſtruck out of the great road to Paris, as ordered, and conveyed the ladies to a little convenient cabbin, the hoſt and hoſteſs whereof, was intirely at his devotion. A defect in the carriage was his excuſe for troubling the ladies to alight, where they had continued but a few moments, before the gallant captain, in the character already mentioned, ſent in his compliments, and begged to be permitted to join company with his fair countrywomen. The prudent Mrs. Rebecca moſt ſagaciouſly denied this requeſt, at the ſame time throwing out many very intel-

ligent

ligent inſinuations, of the impertinent light the ſtranger's application appeared in, to her prudent judgment.

Miſs Caroline's heart went pit a pat; ſhe hoped her deliverer was at hand, but dreaded the conſequence of her deliverance. To be in the power of a ſtranger in a foreign country, ignorant of its language, without one friend, or one ſhilling in her pocket, were, to her, miſerable reflections. But the recollection of her father's unnatural treatment of her, and the end and purport of her journey, diſpelled every ſoftneſs and timidity from her heart, and rouſed her courage and grateful dependance on her promiſed preſerver.

The pretended old gentleman's choler was raiſed, by the abrupt refuſal of his requeſt, and he loudly inſiſted upon ſatisfaction. He declared his deſigns were perfectly honourable, and his behaviour conſiſtent with the rules of travelled civility; nor ſhould any one reſtrain him from,

beholding the face of that perſon, who had ſo greatly injured him, as to ſuſpect him to be other than a gentleman, and a friend to the fair ſex.

Perſeverance, 'tis ſaid, will ſurmount the greateſt of difficulties; it was, indeed, availing to the diſguiſed captain, and made a happy paſſage for him through a little battery of oppoſers, to the door of the ladies apartment, into which he entered without farther ceremony. On ſeeing Mrs. Rebecca, he affected to ſtart with ſurpriſe, and challenged her for an acquaintance. She proteſted her eyes had never before beheld ſo rude a man; but he perſiſted in his claim, and begged ſhe would give him leave to aſſiſt her recollection of him; to which end he repeated the ſeveral artifices of Mr. Forteſcue, his wedding, and the deſign he was then upon, with reſpect to the young lady, and concluded with demanding the letter ſhe had about her, for the lady abbeſs. This was no time for diſſembling; the frighted, guilty wretch,

imme-

immediately delivered her horrid commiſſion. The captain then told her, that ſhe might compoſe herſelf, and, as ſhe hoped for pardon, for the vile part ſhe had acted, to uſe her young lady with the utmoſt kindneſs, and wait his pleaſure at that place, for if ſhe attempted to eſcape from thence, he would inſtantly deliver her up to juſtice. He then addreſſed the trembling Caroline, and conjured her to be ſatisfied, that things would take an agreeable turn, and a few weeks reſtore her to her friends at Brightley; and retired without diſcovering himſelf, kiſſing the hand of his miſtreſs, or once caſting himſelf at her feet, contrary to the example of modern heroes.

Rebecca gave no other ſigns of repentance, than ſullenneſs and ſilence. The mention of Brightley had anſwered the deſired purpoſe, and perfectly calmed the before troubled heart of the lovely miſs Forteſcue, and furniſhed her with many pleaſing reflections. The captain, when

alone, broke open the letter intended for the abbess of the nunnery, and read as follows.

'MOST HONOURED LADY,

'PRESUMING you cannot have forgotten Sarah Clark, who received 'her education at your house, and who 'enjoyed a large share of your kind indul-'gence; I take the liberty of informing 'you, that the bearer of this letter is house-'keeper to a particular friend of mine, and 'has been employed in the troublesome 'and difficult task, of delivering a worthy 'man from a disobedient and head-strong 'daughter, heiress to fifty thousand pounds. 'She has declared rebellion against her pa-'rent and guardians, by refusing to re-'ceive a husband her father had chosen for 'her, and eloping from his house. He, 'therefore, by my means, commits her to 'your care, and requests, that no disci-'pline or exhortation may be wanting to 'bring her to her duty. But should she 'obstinately persist in her non-compliance

'with

'with his will, he is determined never to 'behold her more; and hopes you will, in 'ſuch a caſe, have ſo much conſideration 'and chriſtian regard for her precious ſoul, 'as to ſpare no pains to convert her to the 'true religion, and engage her, by her ac-'ceptance of the veil, to atone her paſt 'tranſgreſſions. Was this action leſs me-'ritorious, I ſhould not have applied to 'you, whoſe indefatigable induſtry I can 'rely upon. In her year of probati-'on, every preliminary, with reſpect to 'her fortune, ſhall be adjuſted to your 'intire ſatisfaction; for the certain per-'formance whereof, I give you my honor 'for your dependance and ſecurity,

'And am, &c.'

'Infernal woman!' cried the captain, caſting the letter upon the table, 'and 'abandoned, unnatural monſter, (father I 'cannot call him) thus to renounce, to ſa-'crifice his child, in order to enjoy her 'fortune! but I will blaſt their hopes, as 'I have defeated their deſigns, and a few

'days only, shall they rejoice in their ill-'gotten possessions.'

He soon dispatched the following letter to Mr. Fortescue, and then waiting upon his Caroline, recompenced himself for all he had done, by conversing and supping with that amiable girl.

'SIR,

'THERE is but one consideration that could restrain me from shew-'ing you to the world in your true colours. 'How have you abused the talents com-'mitted to your care? and employed your 'understanding and great abilities, merely 'in effecting and perpetrating base schemes? 'Heaven, sir, blessed you with an amiable 'child, for a better purpose than betraying 'her innocence and peace. Mr. Stapleton 'appointed you the guardian of your 'daughter's fortune, for a better end 'than endowing a nunnery with it; how 'can you then, thus act in opposition to 'all laws both human and divine? yet,

'yet

'yet you have a protection---the Caroline,
'you have ſo greatly injured, preſerves
'you from the rod of juſtice, if you im-
'mediately comply with the following
'terms. She has long been beloved, with
'a generous and diſintereſted paſſion, by a
'young gentleman, much her inferior in
'fortune. He has not attempted to en-
'gage her clandeſtine acceptance of him,
'but has now preſerved her from the de-
'ſtruction you intended her. If her father
'will conſent to be *his* father, and make
'the conceſſions in her favour voluntarily,
'which the law would oblige him to, the
'ſecret of his unnatural conduct ſhall re-
'main in his breaſt. He is now poſſeſſed
'of Mrs. Swinton's letter to the lady ab-
'beſs, and will, for miſs Forteſcue's ſake,
'prevent its appearing againſt you. Your
'ſpeedy anſwer, if a propitious one, will
'procure the enlargement of your favourite,
'iniquitous handmaid, and determine your
'own fate. You cannot complain; in the
'ſnare that you laid for your child, are
'you yourſelf taken! Commit her, there-

'fore, to the future care of one who is not 'blind to her great merit, and with whom 'her value is superior to the treasures of 'the east. He will reconduct her to Eng'land with honor and safety, nor discover 'himself to her, until he receives your 'sanction, to solicit her hand; the only 'action that can wipe away your guilt, and 'save you from shame.

'I am, &c.'

This letter had all the effect that could be expected on base and mean minds. Mrs. Fortescue was as eager to do justice to the young lady, as Mrs. Swinton had been to injure her, and an answer, to the last degree propitious, was returned to our young hero; which he no sooner received, than he put the ladies in a chaise, and attended them on horseback to Calais, where they continued that night, and the succeeding one were safely landed at Dover. A carriage was engaged by the noble captain, to convey his beloved miss Fortescue to Brightley, and he himself accompanied her

the

the firſt day's journey. Mrs. Rebecca had no conception of the route they were taking, until they arrived at the village, after four days travelling. Mr. Finch took leave of the young lady at the inn; and, wiſhing her ſafe to the place of her deſtination, put the following letter into her hands, the contents of which, he ſaid, would inform her of all ſhe could wiſh to know. She opened it the inſtant he left her, and read, to her great amazement, as follows:

'MADAM,

'YOU have now proceeded twenty 'miles on your way to Brightley, 'where, you well know, there are two 'houſes open to receive you; it is your 'own option that muſt direct you to pre-'fer the one or the other. I have now done 'with preſcribing. Prepare, miſs Forteſ-'cue, for a ſtrange piece of intelligence; 'and, oh, ſuffer your heart to be favour-'ably diſpoſed! Your father's ſervant, 'Frank, your inviſible friend, the old man 'that delivered you from a nunnery, and

'the

'the perſon that now addreſſes you, is the
'ſingle Mr. Finch, who has long, long
'been attached to you. Your peace, your
'happineſs, has been dearer to him than
'his own; and the regard he has for your
'reputation, let his actions ſpeak. To pre-
'ſerve that unſullied, he has denied himſelf
'the ſatisfaction of converſing with you,
'and ſerved you, without any other recom-
'pence, than the pleaſure alone of ſerving
'you. Your father is intirely in his power,
'but he is incapable of uſing it; and, for
'your peace-ſake, will prevent his being
'expoſed. He has conſented to his ſolicit-
'ing that conſideration of him his heart
'has ſo long been ambitious of. You,
'madam, beſt know what you can do in
'his favour, and he is reſolved to abide by
'your determination, be it whatſoever it
'may. His attachment to you is incapable
'of abatement; his affection for you unal-
'terable; and the ſincere wiſh of his heart,
'your happineſs and ſatisfaction. He will
'immediately rejoin his corps, and wait
'the reſult of your reſolves, with how

'much

much painful ſuſpence, tender apprehenſion, and agitation of heart, you are no leſs incapable of conceiving, than he of deſcribing, and muſt ever remain,

'your ſincere admirer,

'FRANCIS FINCH.'

The gentle maid felt, on peruſing this letter, the alternate ſucceſſions of generous, compaſſionate, applauding, affectionate, and grateful ſenſations in her mind; and, as her lover had ſo greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf from the common race of lovers, ſhe determined to deviate from the common behaviour of females, and acknowledge her gratitude and affection for this unexceptionable young man. A thouſand incidents occurred to her imagination, as ſhe purſued her journey, of his delicacy, and his tenderneſs for her; ſhe wanted no companion to converſe with; time flew as ſwiftly as the carriage, and ſhe arrived at Brightley unfatigued in body, and pleaſed in mind.

The happy circle were prepared for her reception, by a letter from Mr. Finch, and they dismissed her attendant, with many tokens of displeasure and disgust. The good girl was ingenuous, acknowledged her obligations to the captain, and confessed he had, previously, inspired her with a tender approbation. She said, if he could think her heart and hand a sufficient recompence for all he had done and suffered, he might command them, and, during her whole life, she would bear his many kindnesses in remembrance. The young officer was informed of the happiness that awaited him, and soon obeyed the glad summons of his friends. Every thing, with respect to the young lady's fortune, was agreeably determined, and Mr. Finch became her legal protector, the third week after her arrival at the village.

Mr. Forteſcue and his lady led a very uneaſy life, mutual upbraidings and reproachings being their daily employment. The diſappointment of their wicked deſigns

figns became an ample punishment, and the furrows of diſcontent were thrown upon each of their brows. Their vice was a bar to their felicity, as the virtue of the Brightley inhabitants, was the foundation of theirs. Each enjoyment was heightened by conſcious worth, each bleſſing received with thankfulneſs of heart; and the common incidents of human infirmities, and inſeparable allays of happineſs in our ſtate of mortality, were conſidered by them, with pious propriety. Nor did they once conceive, that an exemption from evil could be their lot, until they had ſhaken off the imperfection of their nature, by that great change, of corruption for incorruption, and mortality for immortality.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

P. 8. l. 12. for diſagreeable *things*, read diſagreeable *circumſtances*. p. 37. l. 2. for *ſpeaking exchanged a look*, read, *exchanged a ſpeaking look*. p. 98. l. 7. from the bottom, for, quick ſenſibility, read, the quick ſenſibility. p. 209, l. 3. from the bottom, for *were*, read *was*.

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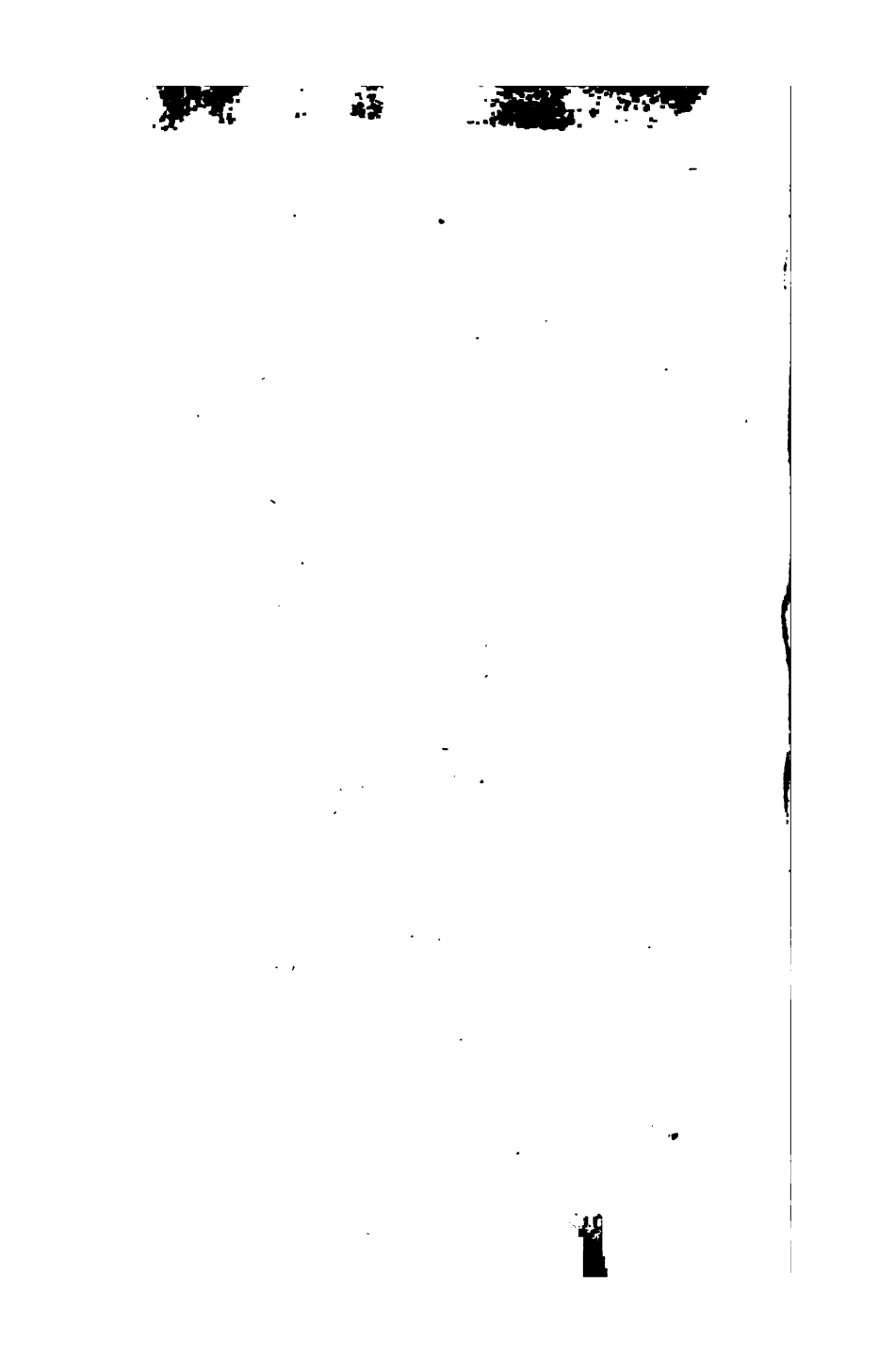
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